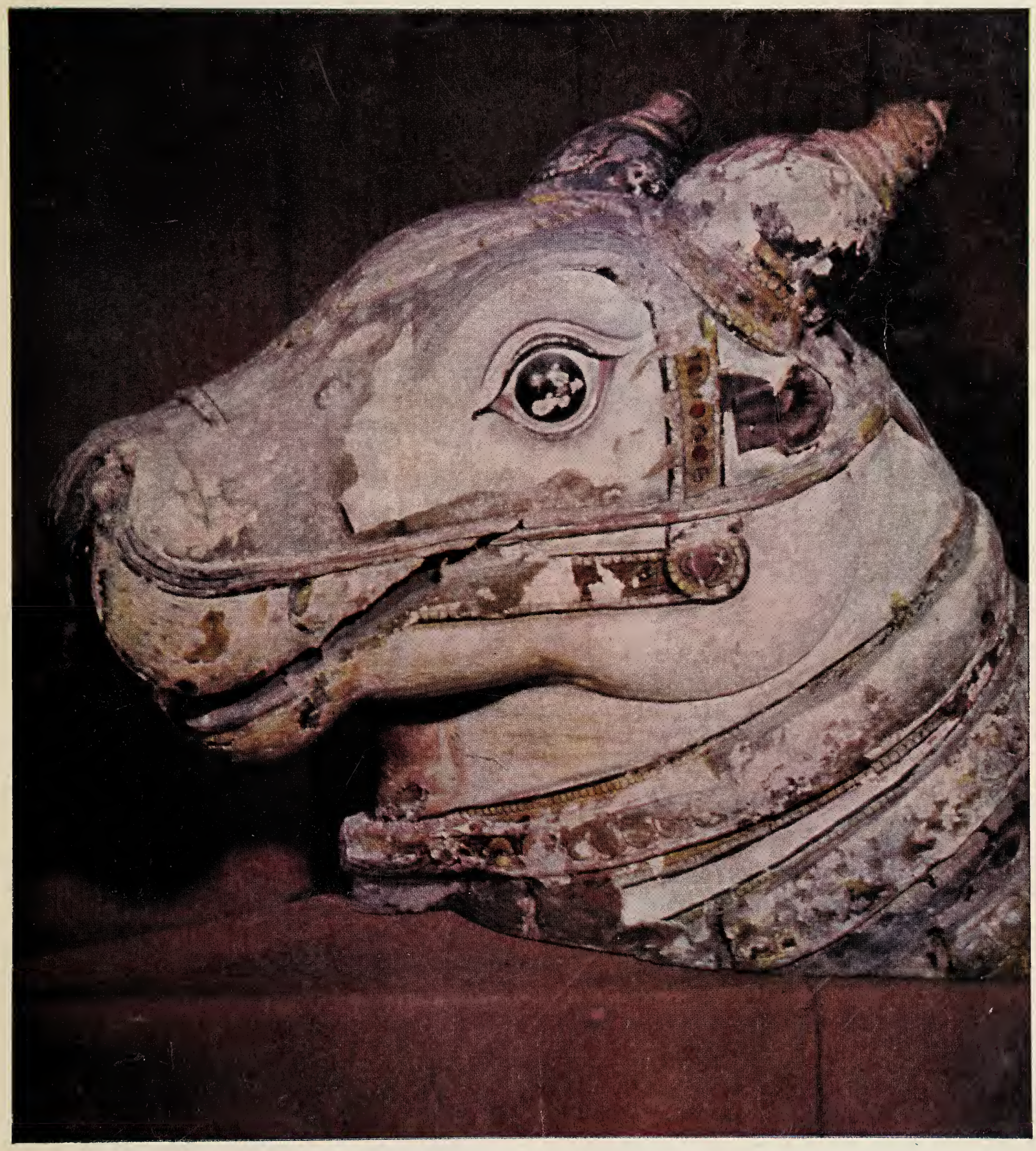
CRAFTS MUSEUM



1. Kumbhakarna (scene from the Ramayana)
13/386 ; leather puppet, painted ; 83 cm × 56 cm
Andhra Pradesh.

CRAFTS MUSEUM

AJIT MOOKERJEE

Director

NEW DELHI

Crafts Museum Publications :

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BANARAS BROCADES

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India's Crafts

Indian Jewellery

Indian Leather Puppets

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Cover : Nandi (Bull) head
7/2585 ; wood, painted ; 60 cm h.
Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.

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INTRODUCTION

India today is planning to develop museums of various kinds. In this growing pattern, the Crafts Museum, which is the only national crafts museum in India, is destined to play a very important role. By assembling, preserving and displaying craft objects, this institution will rightly justify India's unique position in the field of handicrafts—a cultural heritage coming down for millennia. The All India Handicrafts Board, since its inception in 1952, undertook to collect and preserve as many of these valuable objects as possible for purposes of study, research and reproduction. Although these outstanding exhibits provided an inspiration for developing a crafts museum, it was not until the year 1956-57 that a suitable display of the material could be arranged in New Delhi and the Crafts Museum for the first time was brought to the notice of the public.

Indeed the fantastic technology of our age may well have convinced many that what was, "is dead and gone"; all that remains is to come. But the very existence of such a view point, however right or wrong, is just the most powerful reason for the Crafts Museum to reaffirm and perform its fundamental responsibility—the preservation, display and elucidation of India's heritage.

Despite decades of neglect, the Indian craftsmen have preserved their creativity and tradition. This capacity has burst out in a flood of artistic expression: the vast reservoir of Indian culture has now flowed out of geographical boundaries. The contemporary Indian craftsmen have encountered the modern world, and reacted to it with unique and perceptive insights, which were expressed by their ancestors through various media.

In course of only 15 years, the collection grew to be rich both in quality as well as in quantity. The exhibits have not only brought to light many unexplored regions of creative forms and colour but have also opened up a wide horizon of mystic and symbolic significance.

A collection is necessary to form a museum, but all that is a collection is not a museum. The Crafts Museum galleries have not been stuffed with merely the rich and the rare. The guiding principle in the matter of selection

has always been the inclusion of old as well as the new specimens of intrinsic merit.

Side by side with the development of the Museum, its educational and cultural possibilities have also been considered. A reference library with arrangements for projection and lectures has been set apart and a section is also instituted with various rich photographic records and slides. The Museum has a unique collection of more than 15,000 exhibits mainly, pottery and terracottas, textiles and jewellery, stone and ivory carvings, bronzes and metalwares, wood and basketery, paintings and leather work, dolls and toys and so on. Though the folk and ritual elements are predominant, there are specimens which reveal the influence of classical style representing various traditional schools. Of special interest are Pata paintings from Bengal, Orissa, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. In composition, spacing, application of colour and bold rendering of forms these folk paintings offer a type of work rarely to be seen.

Care has been taken to illustrate the wealth of design and richness of variety of Indian textiles. The prize collection is a rare specimen of a large size Kalamkari temple hanging, depicting the entire episodes from the Ramayana. Besides, there are Assam and Manipuri mekhalas, Baluchar saris, Masulipatnam batik, Banaras brocades, Gujarat patolas, Thanjavur silk, Punjab phulkaris, Kashmir shawls and wide range of decorative quilts from Bengal, Bihar and Gujarat. Other items include old and rare textile prints and a number of interesting Kalamkari printing blocks. In addition to these there is a wide variety of specimens of costume designs, excellently embroidered work, choli pieces and ghagras, etc.

The extensive collection of Adivasi textiles and craft objects is a speciality of this Museum. The bold colour, decorative designs and motifs reveal the tribal people's depth of imagination and the clever way of rendering simple but variegated forms in different objects. There are interesting objects made in traditional style from marble, soap stone, glass, ivory, etc. Among these the Agra stonewares with semi precious stones inlaid decoration are considered very artistic specimens and compared favourably with ornamental flasks and glasses made in the best Mughal tradition. Other objects include elaborately finished ivory products from Bengal, Rajasthan, Mysore and Kerala and some unique specimen of engraving on tempered

2. Krishna surrounded by Gopis
16/270 ; cloth, painted ; 44 cm × 33.5 cm
Puri, Orissa.

steel swords and shields. These are specified crafts practised in Udaipur in Rajasthan. Then there is a large variety of village chappals and shoes of different designs.

A large number of objects in metal and wood also figure in the collection. The metal objects are from various regions and offer the best in the metal craft of the country. The bronze images are made in the usual tradition of the cire perdue processes. The rest of the metal wares reveal a variety of forms. These include a large number of house-hold utensils to meet different utilitarian purposes such as bowls, cups, spoons, plates, jars, measures and the like. Apart from a wide range of metalwares from Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, some metal objects show excellent silver inlay or Bidri work particularly from Andhra Pradesh which decorate rose water containers, book stands, plates and bowls etc.

The metal collection has lately been enriched by acquisition of primitive bronzes. These bronzes may reveal some new facets in the evolution of Indian art specially about the many iconographic types, disseminated all over the country.

Wood carvings mainly come from Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Kerala where the craft is still alive. From Orissa there is a painted temple door which displays some striking specimens of figures depicting the ten incarnations of Vishnu. Other wood work in this Museum are ornamental temple brackets, musical instruments, caskets, objects with engravings on a large variety of wooden sculptures including nayika figures. There is also a rich collection of terracottas, pottery, sikki grass objects, ceramics, jewellery and paper-cut designs and miscellaneous other objects. The predominant among the terracottas is the Bankura horses and Ayyanar deities, now well-known all over the country for their aesthetic appeal.

India is rich in jewellery but the traditional designs are appreciably preserved in the folk type. The Museum has made a special effort to collect as many specimens as possible so that modern designers may choose from myriads of Indian forms—now threatened with gradual extinction. There is an excellent collection of masks in colourful variety. A rich collection of leather puppets from Andhra Pradesh has also been acquired for the Museum.

3. Bullock cover (detail) depicting battle of Ravana and Hanumana
7/1246 ; cotton, embroidered quilt ; 214 cm × 148 cm
Punjab.

About 300 portfolio of designs, 15,000 photographs and 3,000 slides revealing various arts and crafts of the country enrich the photograph and slide library and are available to scholars for study and consultation. There is a collection of artistic motifs which are intended to be a source of ideas and inspiration to our formulation of new forms and new uses evoked by what our master craftsmen had done in their time.

Dates for items have not been mentioned individually in the captions accompanying the illustrations. No specimens reproduced in the plates can claim antiquity prior to the 17th century A.D., but in most cases they retain the traditional expressions of ageless forms.

4. Mahisa-mardini (Goddess Durga)
16/163 ; cloth, painted ; 53.5 cm × 48 cm
Puri, Orissa.

5. Rider on Horse
7/2523 ; terracotta ; 60 cm × 60 cm.
Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.

DOLLS AND TOYS

6. Mother and child
7/4162 ; terracotta ; 20 cm h.
Asharikandi (Goalpara), Assam.

7. Doll
   7/2460 ; cloth, straw and light wood ; 47 cm h.
   Ceylon.

8a. Toilet
19/4 ; wooden toy, painted ; 16 cm h.
Jaipur, Rajasthan.

b. Owl
7/2354 ; wooden toy, painted ; 26.5 cm h.
Nutangram (Burdwan), West Bengal.

9. Vermilion Box with a lady standing in front
7/2490 ; painted wood ; 25.5 cm h.
Udaipur, Rajasthan.

10. Indian Dolls
16/100 (2) etc. ; wooden dolls, painted ; 15 cm to 22 cm h.
Bengal, Orissa and Bihar.

11. Male Doll
7/3059 ; wood, painted ; 25 cm h.
Andhra Pradesh.

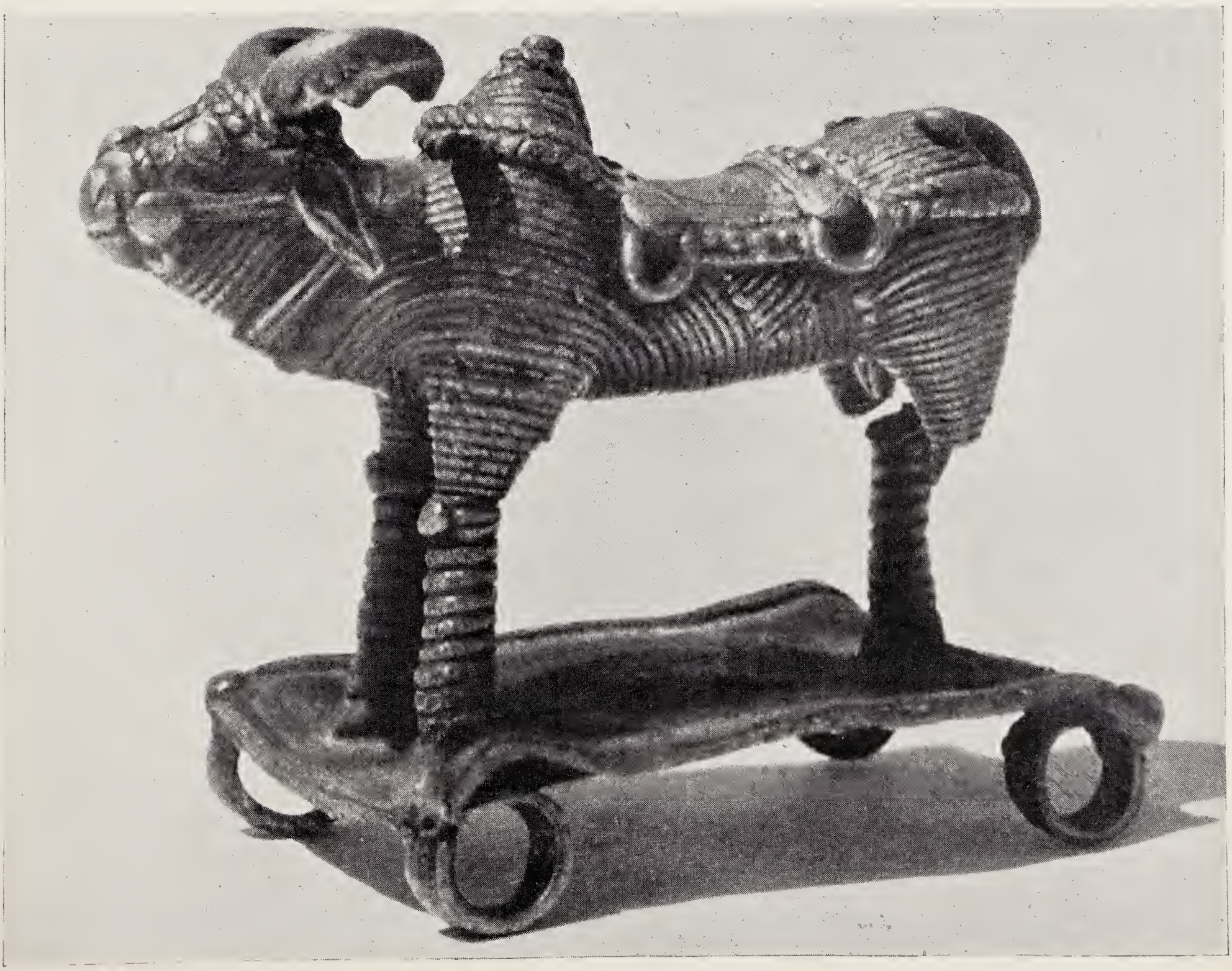
12. Female Doll
7/3060 ; wood ; painted ; 22 cm h.
Andhra Pradesh.

13. Cow
7/2127-17 ; wood and cloth ; 35 cm h.
Gujarat.

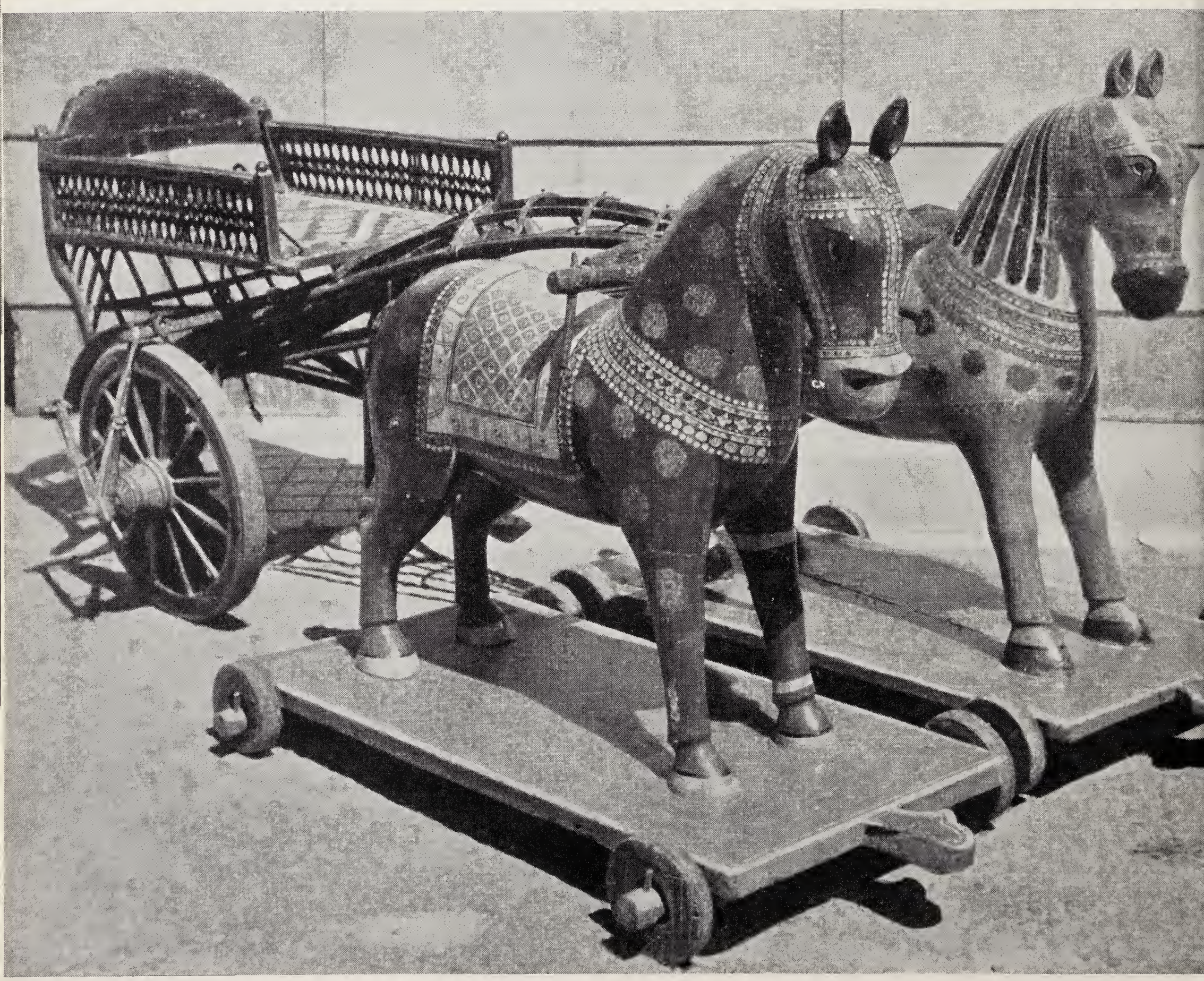
14. Horse
    7/2128 (9) ; wood and cloth ; 27 cm h.
    Gujarat.

15. Rider on a Wheeled Camel
Folk/2 ; brass ; 36 cm h.
Rajasthan.

16. Bull
Folk/9 ; brass ; 11.5 cm h.
Madhya Pradesh.

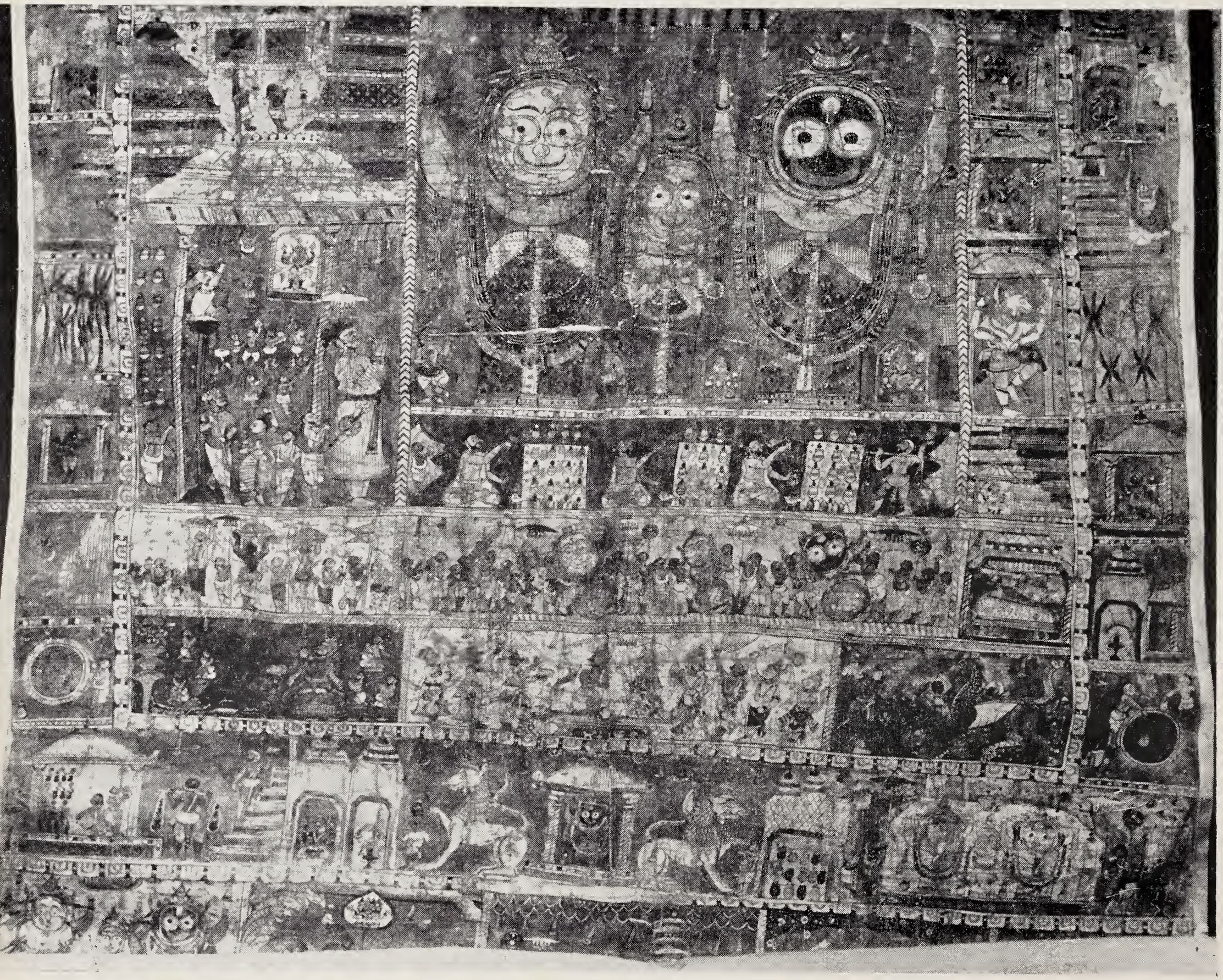


17. Toy Horse Cart
7/3094 ; wood, painted ; 166 cm.
Rajasthan.



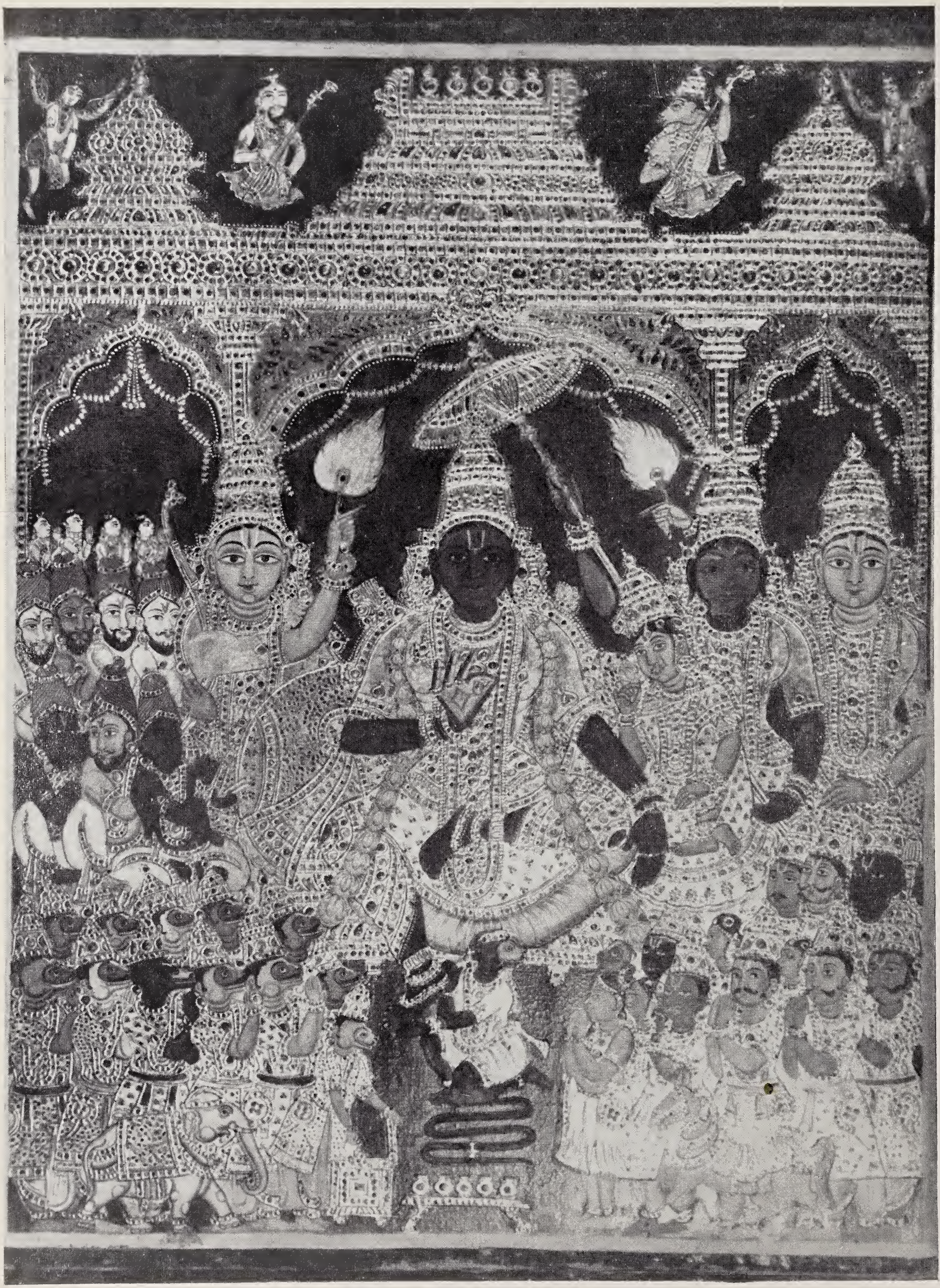
PAINTINGS

18. Temple wall hanging depicting Krishna surrounded by Gopis (Painted Pechwai) 7/4207 ; cotton, painted ; 206 cm × 262 cm. Nathdwara, Rajasthan.



19. Temple wall hanging depicting Jagannatha, Balarama and Subhadra
7/1114 ; cotton, painted ; 286 cm × 131 cm
Puri, Orissa.

20. Goddess Lakshmi
7/4209 ; paper, painted ; 45.5 cm × 28 cm
Kalighat (Calcutta), West Bengal.



21. Abhisekha (installation) of Rama
7/1368 ; cotton, painted ; 78 cm × 61.5 cm
Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.

22. Mother and Child
7/4217 ; wood, painted ; 64 cm × 41.5 cm
Kangra, Himachal Pradesh.

23. Kumbhakarna sleeping (scene from the Ramayana)
7/2839 (37) ; cloth, painted ; 13 cm × 10.5 cm
Orissa.

24. Temple wall hanging depicting scenes from the Ramayana
13/300 ; cotton, kalamkari print ; 1088 cm × 212 cm
Masulipatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

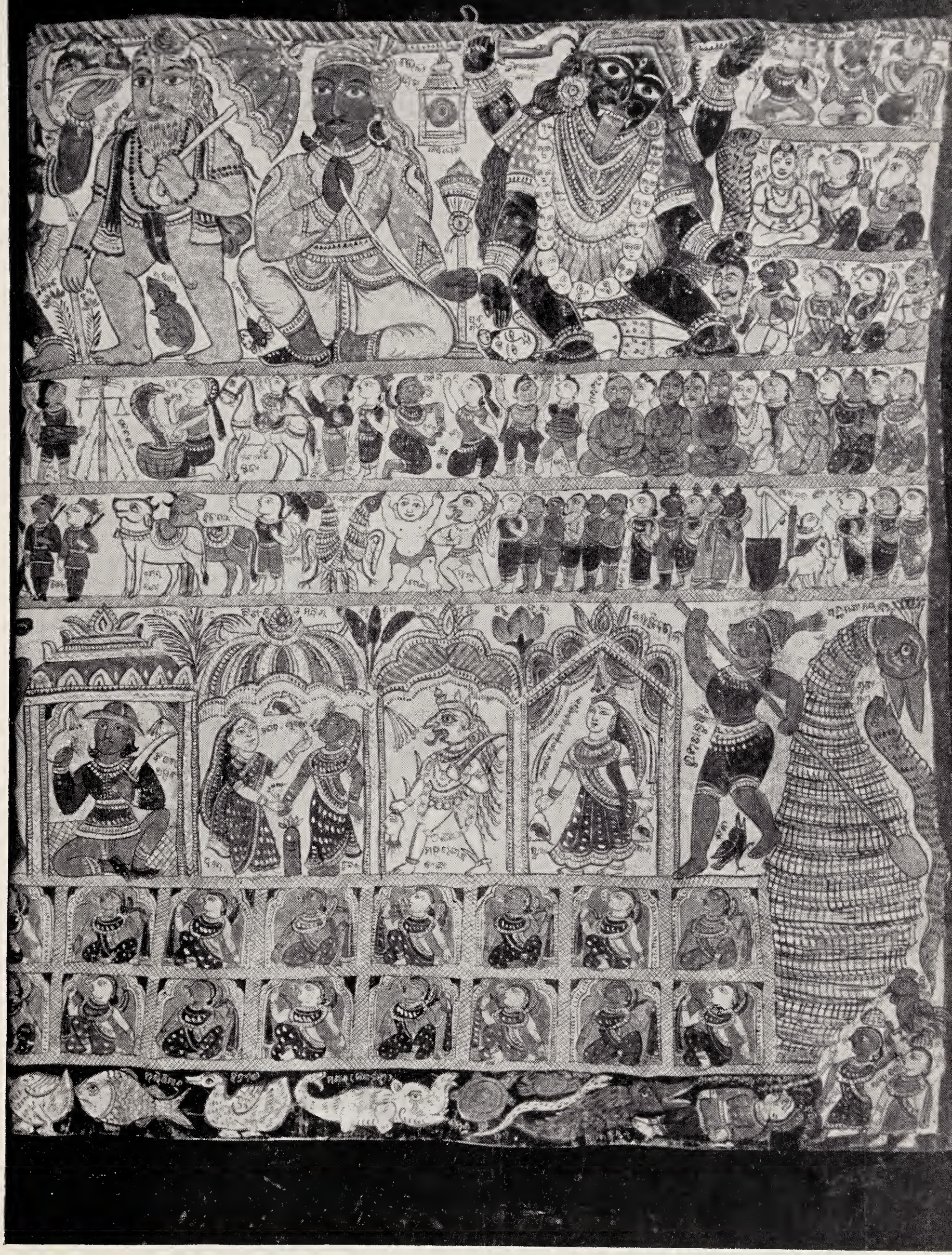
25. Scenes from the Ramayana
7/3823 ; cotton, scroll painting, 533 cm × 116 cm
Andhra Pradesh.

26. Scenes from the Mahabharata 5/115 ; paper, scroll painting fixed on cloth ; 264 cm × 184 cm Gujarat.

27. Seated female figure
13/283 ; paper, painted ; 20 cm × 14.5 cm
Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.

28. Seated Nandi (Bull)
7/2696 ; cloth, painted ; 13 cm × 8.5 cm
Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.

29. Temple wall hanging depicting Yama Pata 5/366 ; cotton, painted ; 554 cm × 271 cm Rajasthan.



30. Temple wall hanging depicting mythological scenes
16/322 ; cotton, painted ; 228 cm × 145 cm
Orissa.

31. Krishna with two Gopis
13/283 ; paper, painted ; 30 cm × 24.5 cm
Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.

TEXTILES

32. Chamba Rumal
7/2166 ; cloth, embroidered ; 58 cm × 58 cm
Chamba, Himachal Pradesh.

33. Bullock cover depicting battle of Ravana and Hanumana
7/1246 ; cotton, embroidered quilt with glass setting ; 214 cm × 148 cm
Punjab.

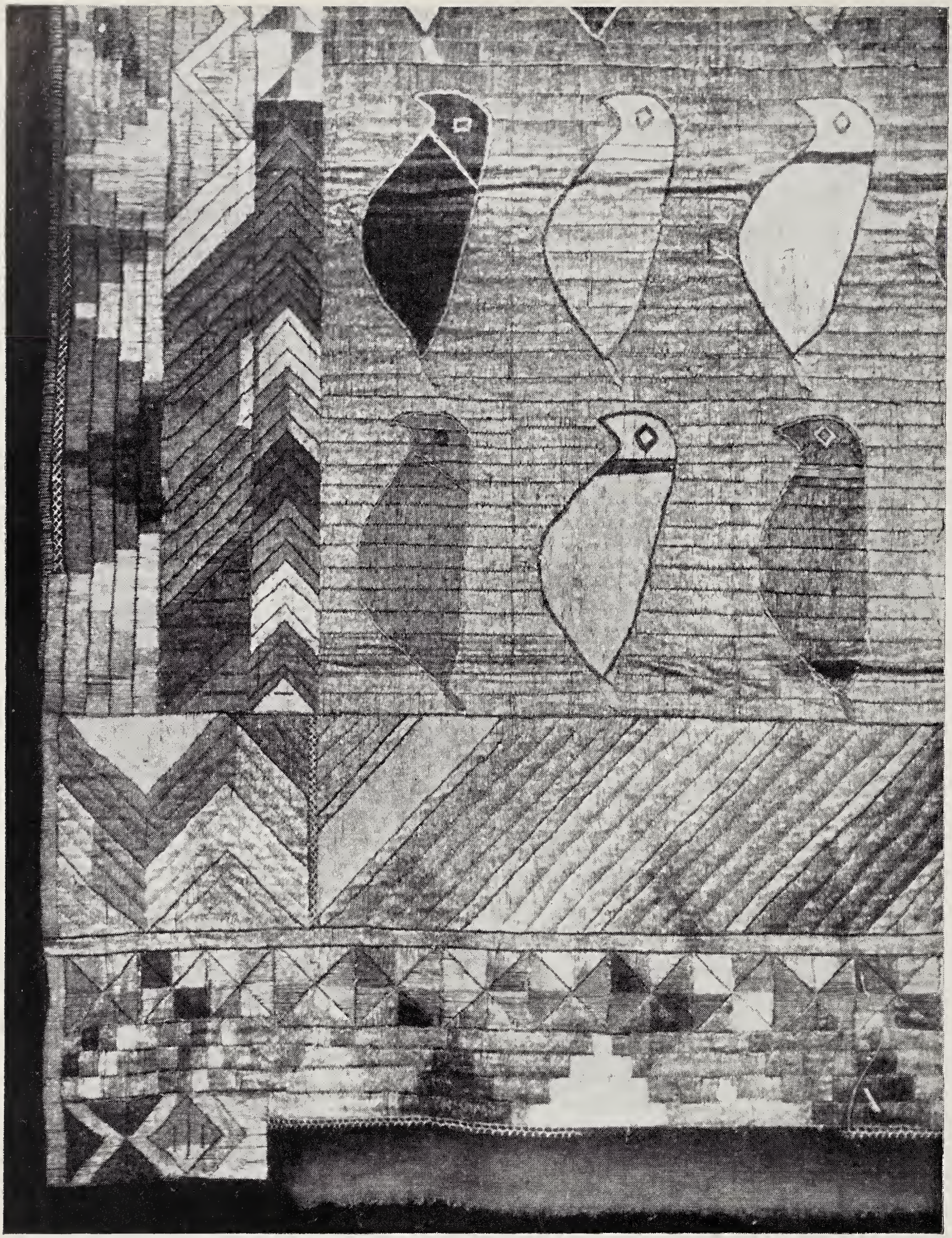
34. Kantha (Quilt)
4/389 ; cotton, embroidered with flora
and fauna on white ground ; 134 cm × 198 cm
Bengal.

35. Shawl (Jamewar)
7/1214 ; wool, woven designs on black ground ; 336 cm × 168 cm
Kashmir.

36. Anchla (end piece) of a Baluchar Sari
7/4223 ; woven silk ; 428 cm × 113 cm
Murshidabad, Bengal.

37. Ceiling hanging (Chandwa)
Folk/20 ; cloth, embroidered with silk threads and mirror settings ; 230 cm × 115 cm
Gujarat.

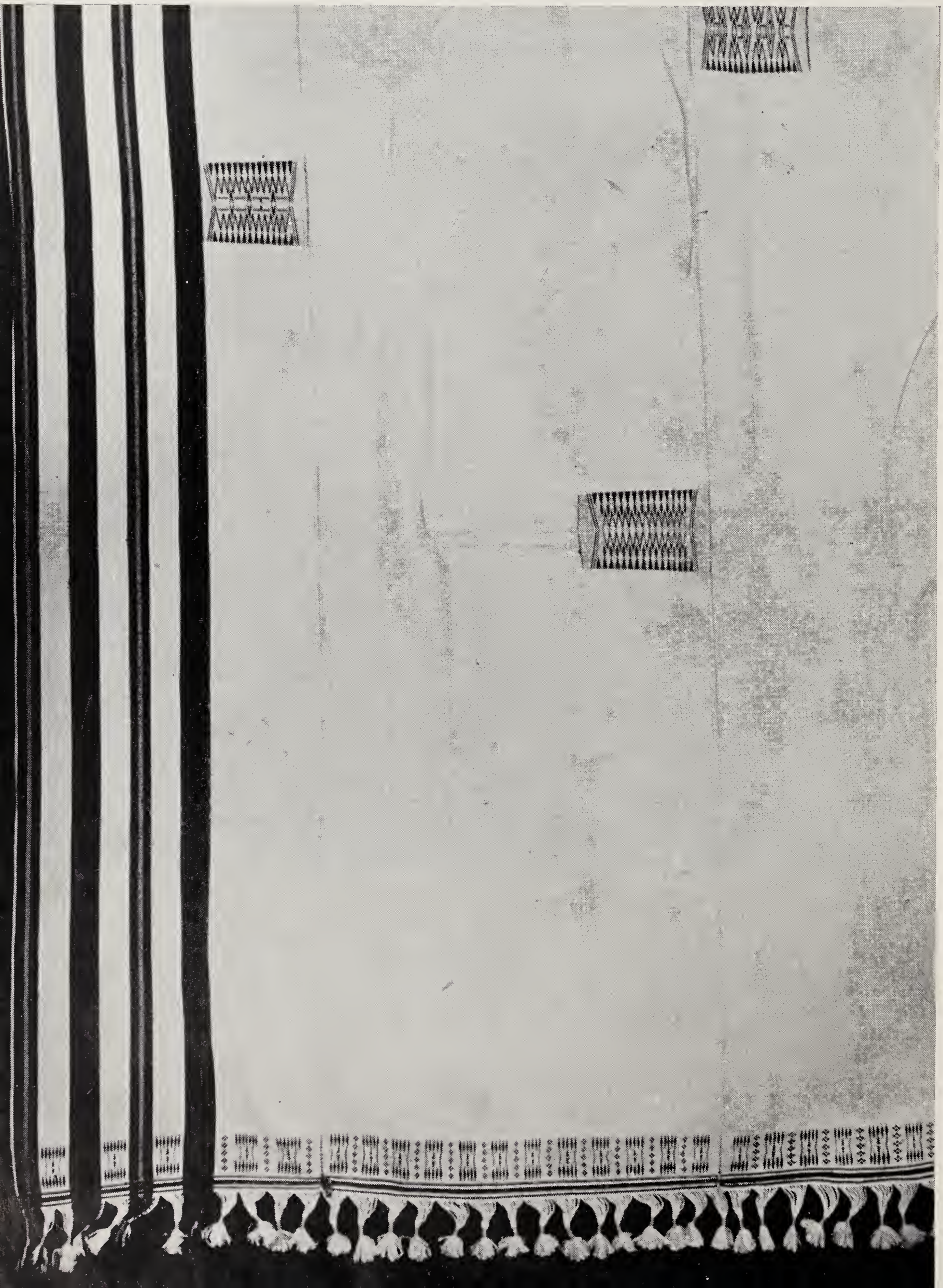
38. Anchla (end piece) of a Jamdani Sari
7/4221 ; woven cotton ; 105 cm × 420 cm
Dacca, East Bengal.



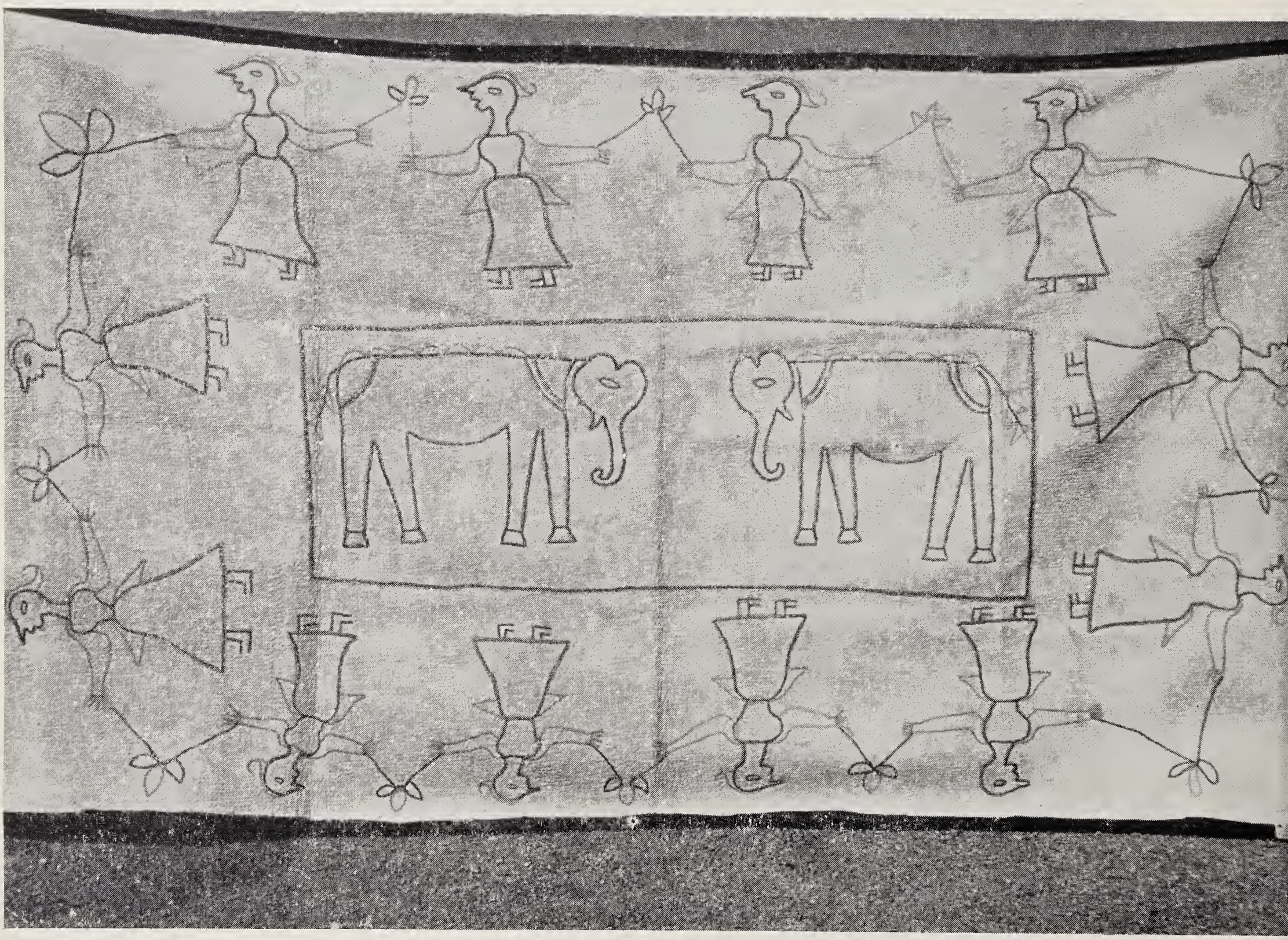
39. Phulkari Bed Cover (detail)
18/48 ; cotton, embroidered with silk threads of green, white and magenta on red ground ; 142 cm × 277 cm.
Punjab.

40. Phulkari Chadar (detail)
7/1135-c ; cotton, embroidered with silk threads of white, yellow and red depicting flowers on black ground ; 234 cm × 124 cm
Punjab.

41. Naga Chadar (detail)
7/1709 ; cotton, woven, black and red striped border on white ground ; 200 cm × 113 cm
Nagaland.

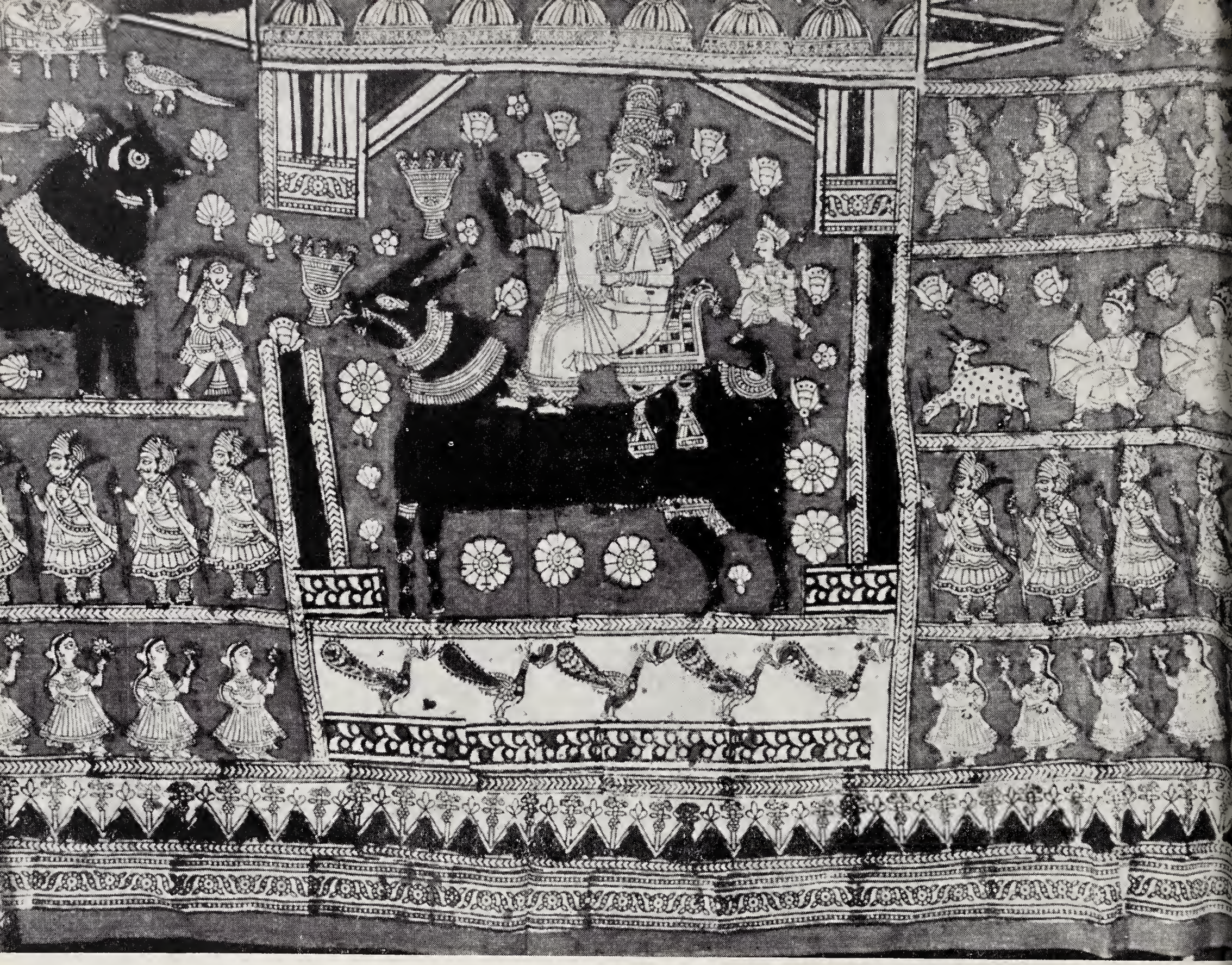


42. Chadar
7/4040 ; cotton, embroidered with silk threads of white, red, black and blue on brown ground ; 230 cm × 99 cm
Kathiawar, Gujarat.



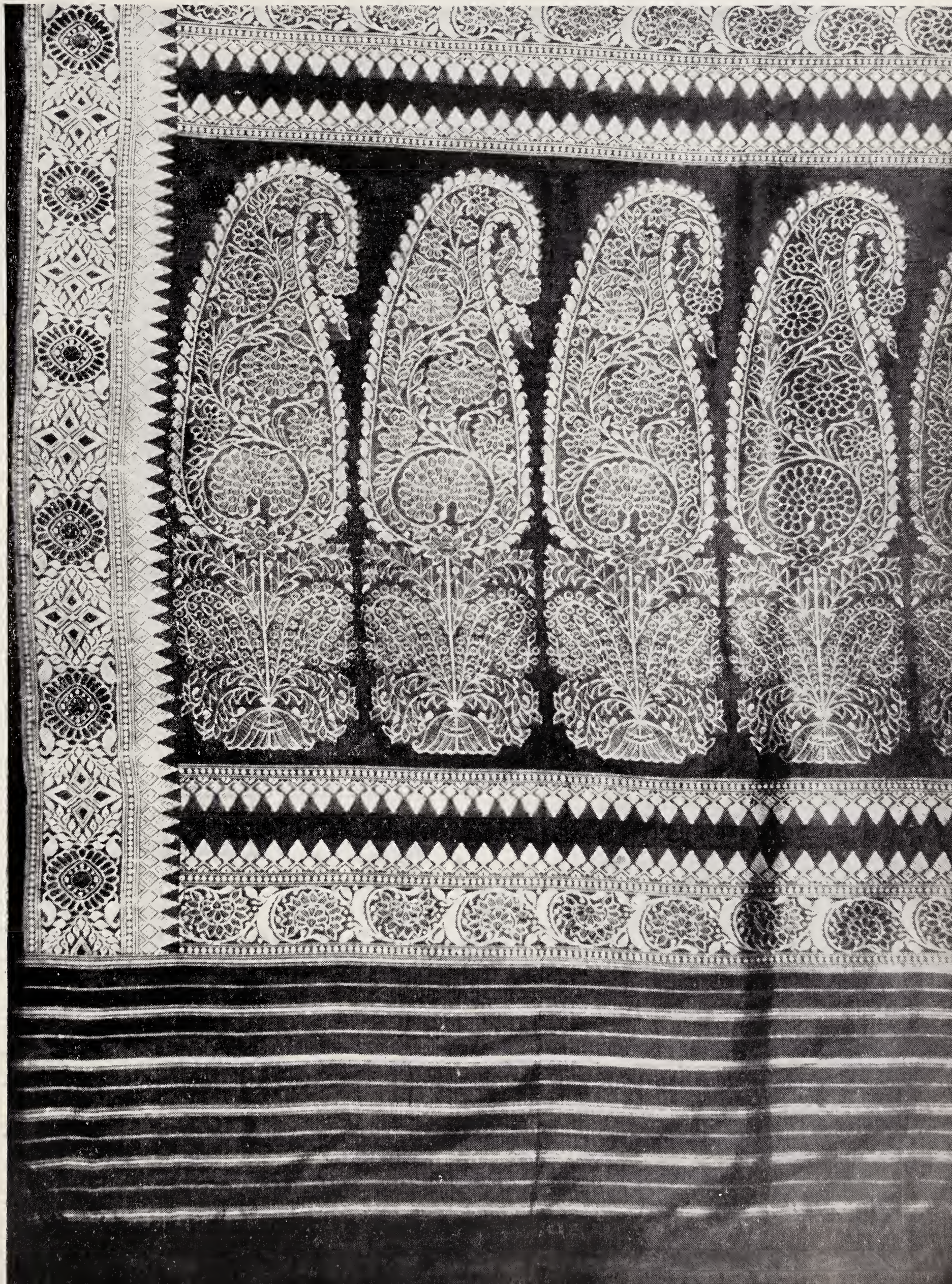
43. Kantha (Quilt)
7/2396 ; cotton, embroidered figures of females and elephants on white ground ; 195 cm × 118 cm
Bihar.

44. Table Cloth (detail)
13/177 ; cotton, printed in multicoloured floral designs ; 117 cm × 110 cm
Rajasthan.

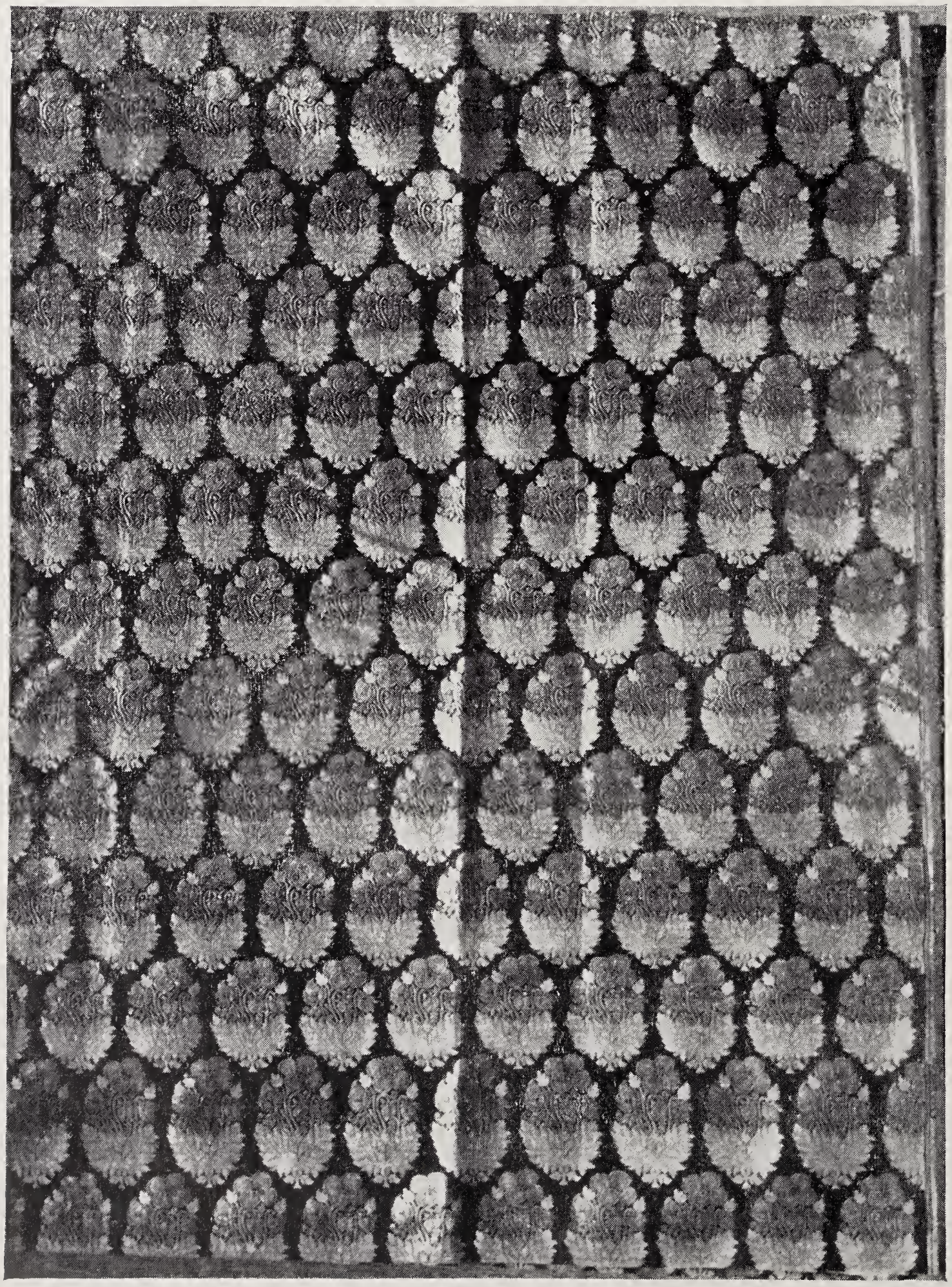


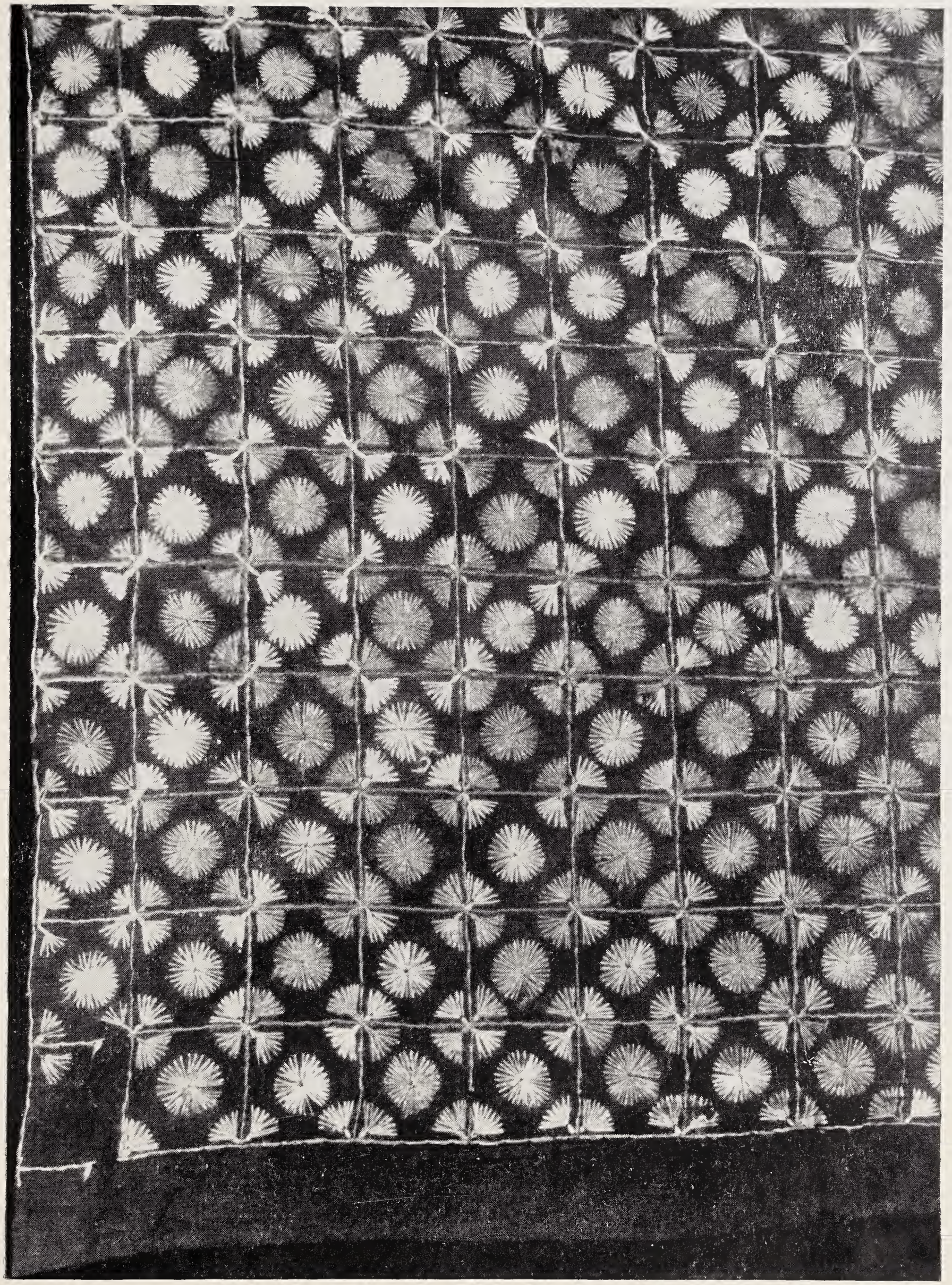
45. Wall hanging
14/86 ; cotton, hand print, depicting Pethogarh Mata or Mother Goddess ; 260 cm × 140 cm
Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

46. Anchla (end piece) of a
Baluchar Sari (detail)
7/1713 ; woven silk depicting
kalka borders ; 120 cm × 538 cm
Murshidabad, Bengal.



47. Brocade
7/4117 ; cloth, silver and gold jari
works on green ground ; 280 cm × 91 cm
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.



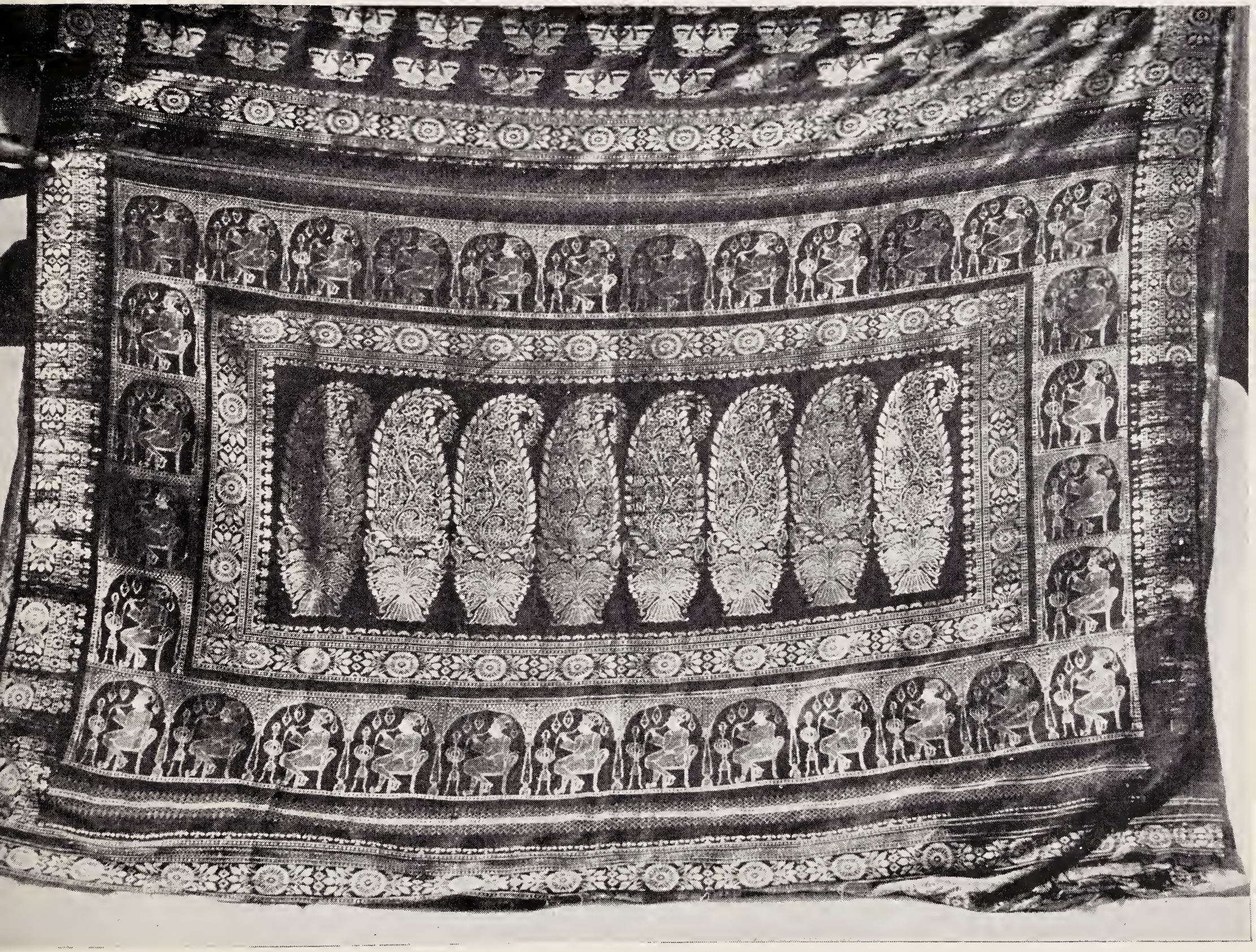


48. Phulkari Bed Cover (detail)
18/52 ; cotton, embroidered flower with threads of yellow and rose on red ground ; 148 cm × 256 cm
Punjab.

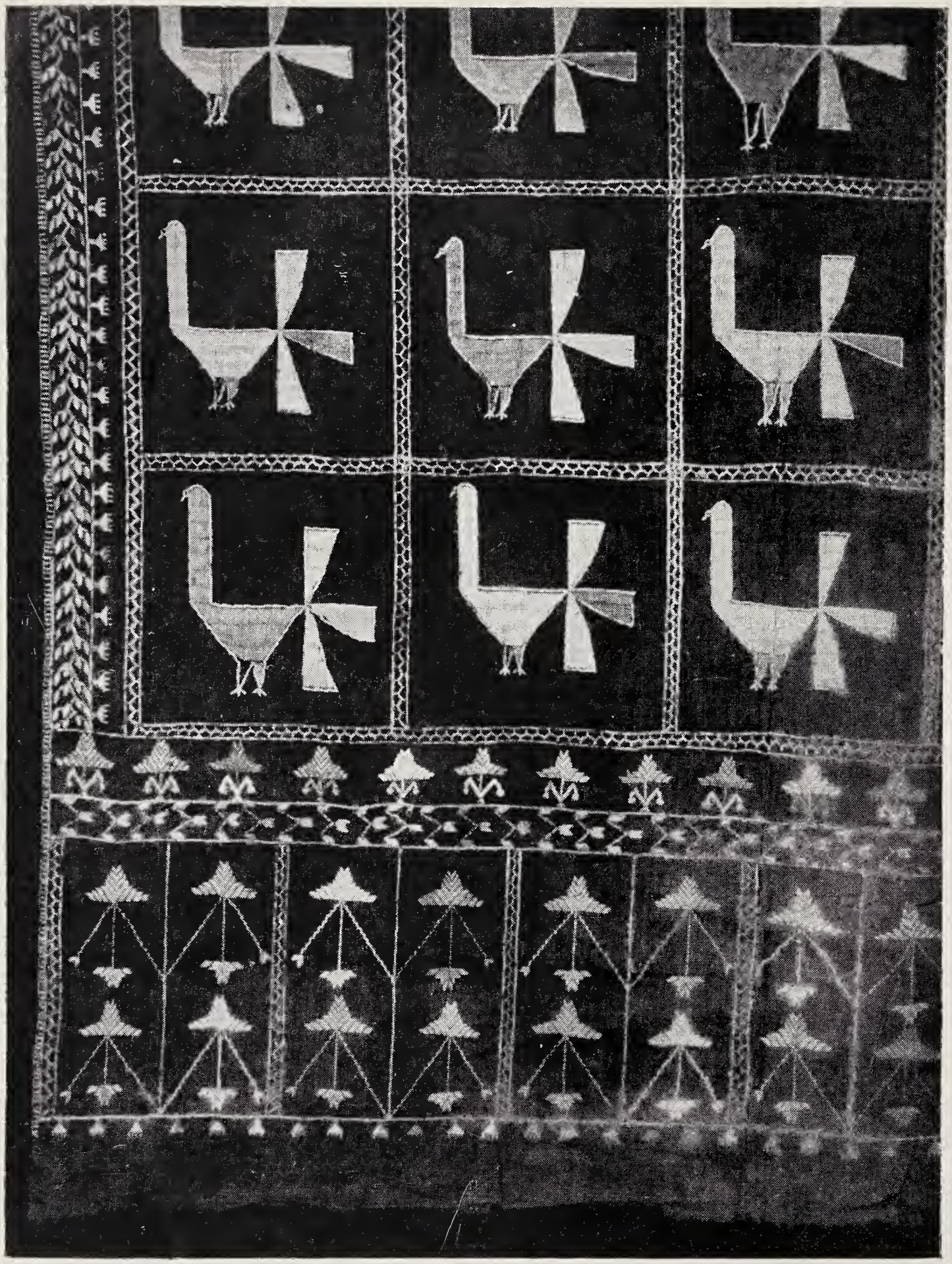
49. Aachhkan
5/205 ; cotton, velvet and jari embroidery ; 132 cm 1.
Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

50. Applique Work (detail)
7/2126 ; cotton ; 210 cm × 156 cm
Gujarat.

51. Bed Spread (detail)
7/4033 ; cotton, cross-stitched with silk threads and glass settings on red ground ; 225 cm × 174 cm
Punjab.



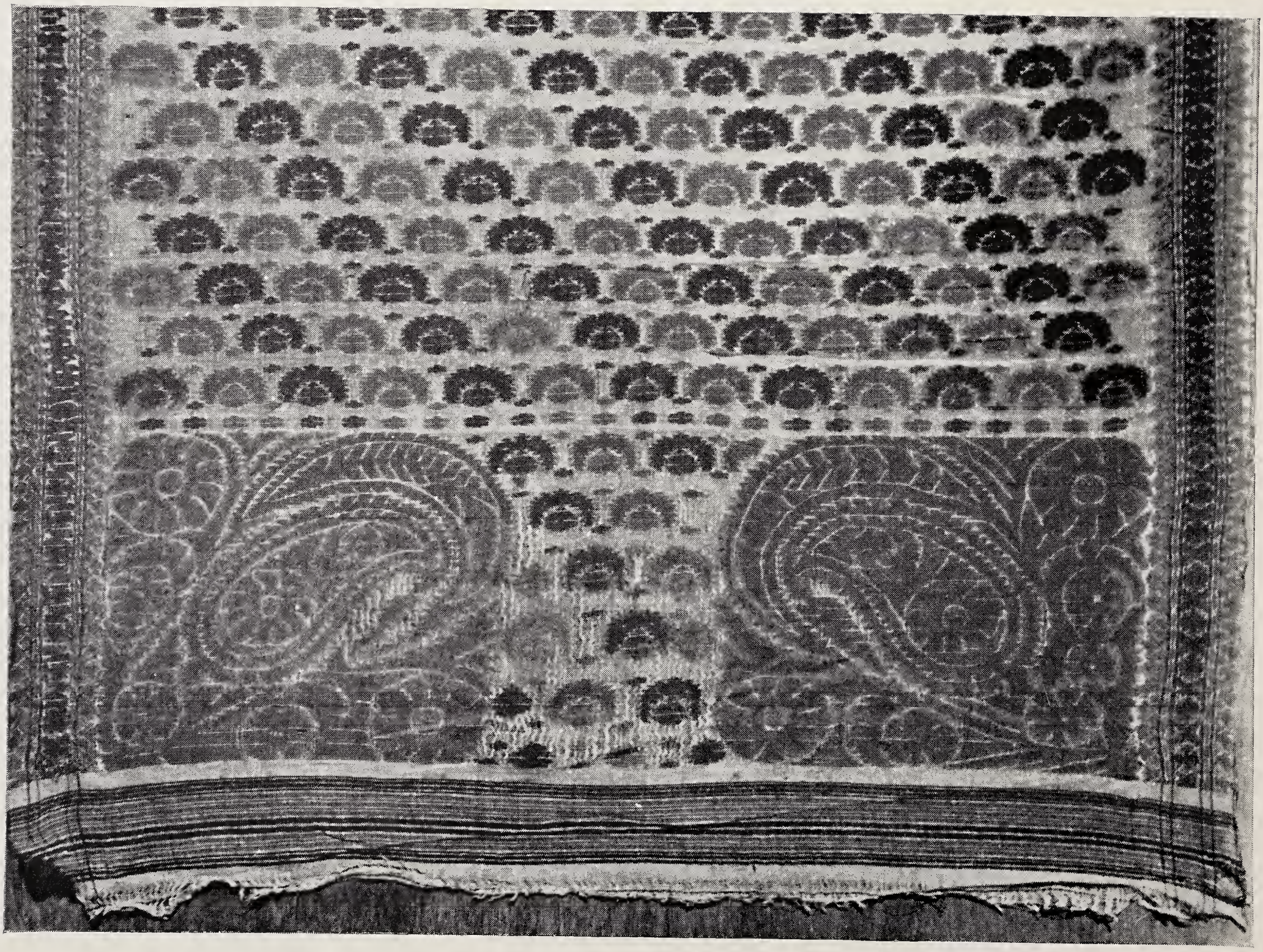
52. Anchla (end piece) of a
Baluchar Sari (detail)
7/4222 ; woven silk depicting human figures and kalkas ; 476 cm × 116 cm
Murshidabad, Bengal.



53. Phulkari Chadar (detail)
18/61 ; cotton, embroidered with silk threads of white, blue and red depicting peacocks and flowers ; 244 cm × 136 cm
Punjab.

54. Wall Hanging (Pechwai)
Folk/1 ; Applique work on cloth ; 183 cm × 156 cm
Rajasthan.

55. Jamdani Sari (detail)
7/3770 ; woven cotton ; 388 cm × 96 cm
Dacca, East Bengal.



METAL WARES

56. Cavalier
7/4164 ; brass ; 9 cm h.
Rajasthan.

57. Nut Cracker in the shape
of a horse
7/3159 ; brass with iron blade ; 21 cm 1.
Gujarat.

58. Perfume Casket in the shape of a peacock 7/1507 ; silver filigree work ; 16.5 cm h. Karimnagar, Andhra Pradesh.

59. Siva Linga with serpent hood surrounded by Nandi, Ganesh and other devotees.
7/2131; brass; 28 cm h.
Tamil Nadu.

60. Jug
7/2175 ; silver, brass and copper encrusted ware ; 34 cm h.
Srinagar, Kashmir.

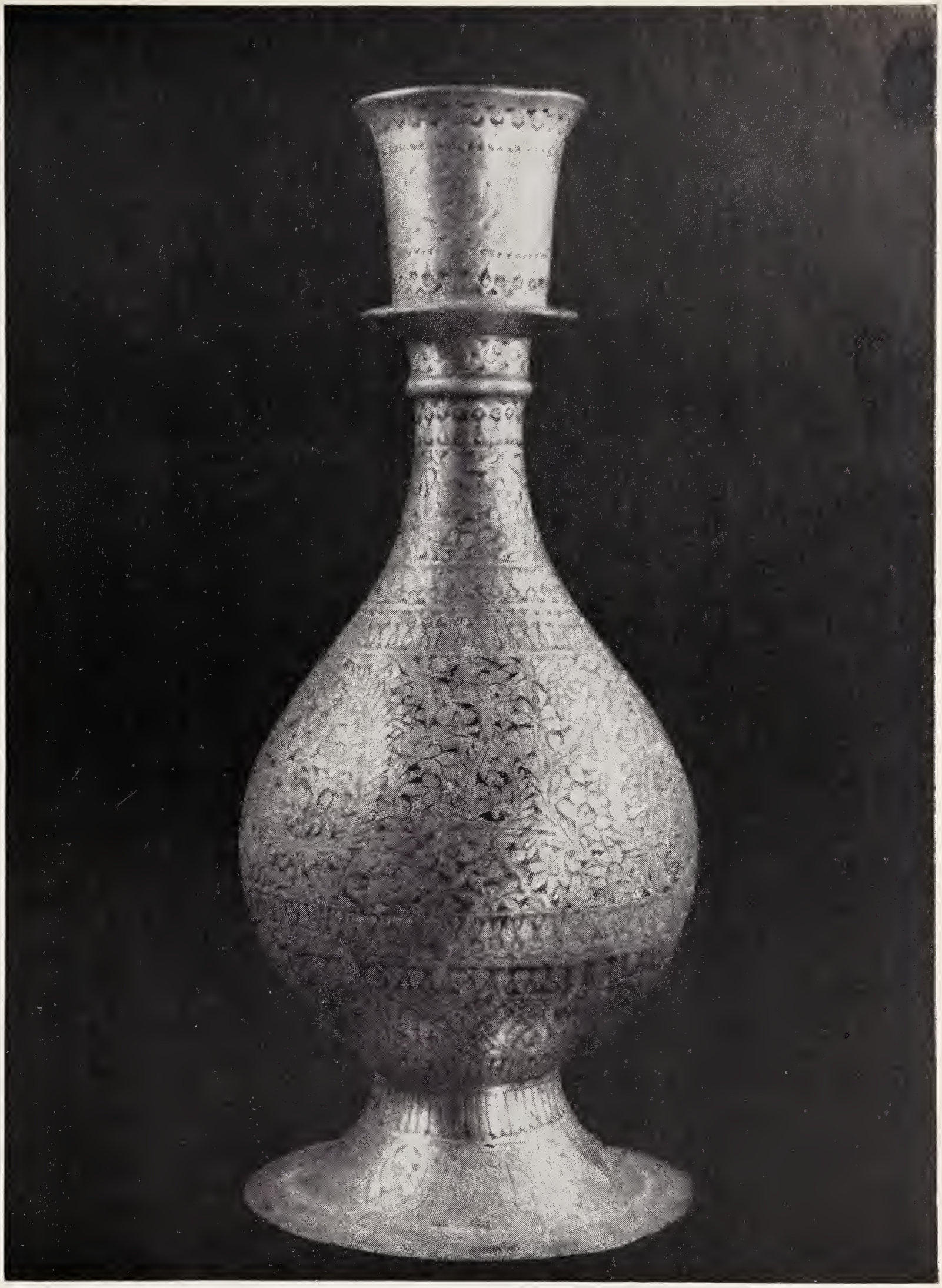
61. Deepalakshmi
7/2134 ; brass ; 60 cm h.
Tamil Nadu.

62. Rider on a Wheeled Horse
7/2524 ; brass ; 33 cm h.
Jagdalpur (Bastar), Madhya Pradesh.

63. Siva Head with silver inlay 7/179 ; brass ; 14 cm h. Gujarat.

64. Couple
7/3323 ; brass ; 44.5 cm h.
Madhya Pradesh.

65. A pair of chain for swing
Folk/10 ; brass ; 169 cm 1.
Rajasthan.



66. Flower Vase
7/2498 ; brass ; enamelled work ; 28 cm h.
Jaipur, Rajasthan.

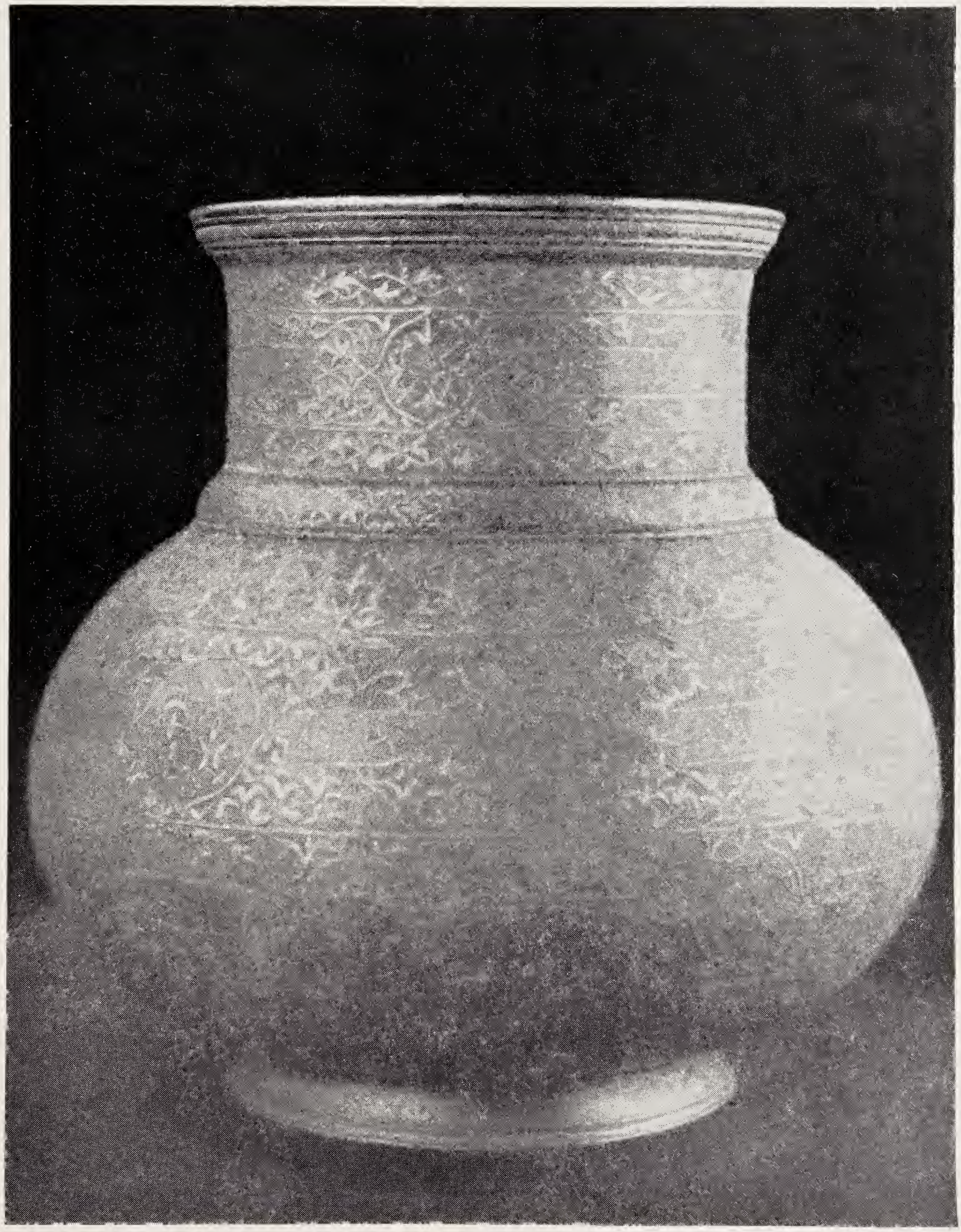
67. Surahi and Plate
7/4160 ; Bidri work ; 29 cm h., 18 cm dia. (plate)
Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

68. Salver with Lakshmi Narayan
in the centre
7/390 ; encrusted swami work of
copper and silver on brass ; 20 cm dia.
Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.

69. Powder Casket
7/83 ; engraved brass work ; 8.5 cm h., 14 cm dia.
Jaipur, Rajasthan.

70. Mask
7/3469 ; bronze, 24 cm h.
Kulu Valley, Himachal Pradesh.

71. Kunke (Rice measuring bowl)
7/93 ; brass, 8 cm h., 12 cm dia.
Bihar.



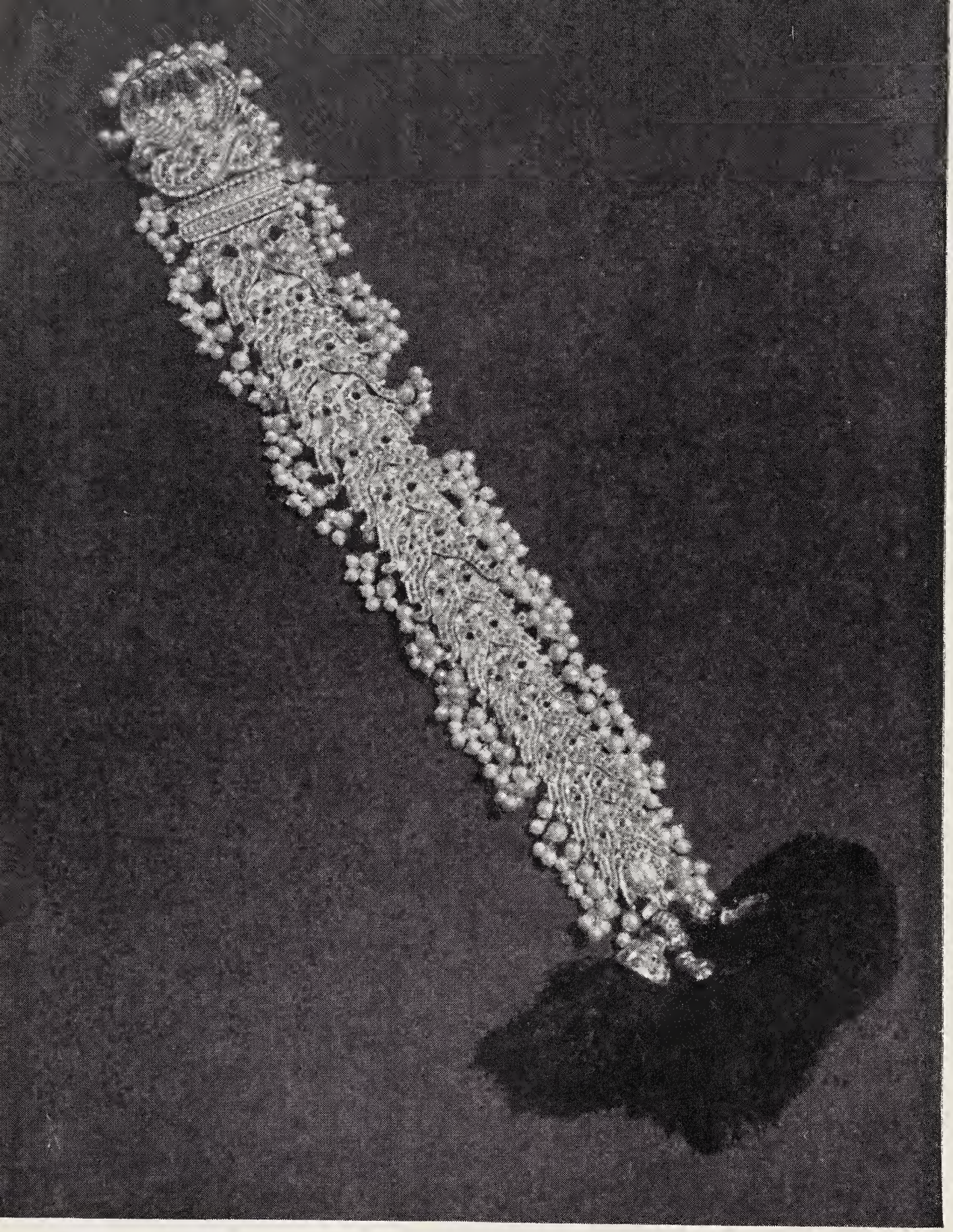
72. Lota
7/207 ; silver inlay on brass ; 13 cm h.
Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

73. Golapdan
20/18 ; silver repousse work ; 26 cm h.
Kashmir.

74. Cot leg
9/52 ; bidri work ; 48 cm h.
Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

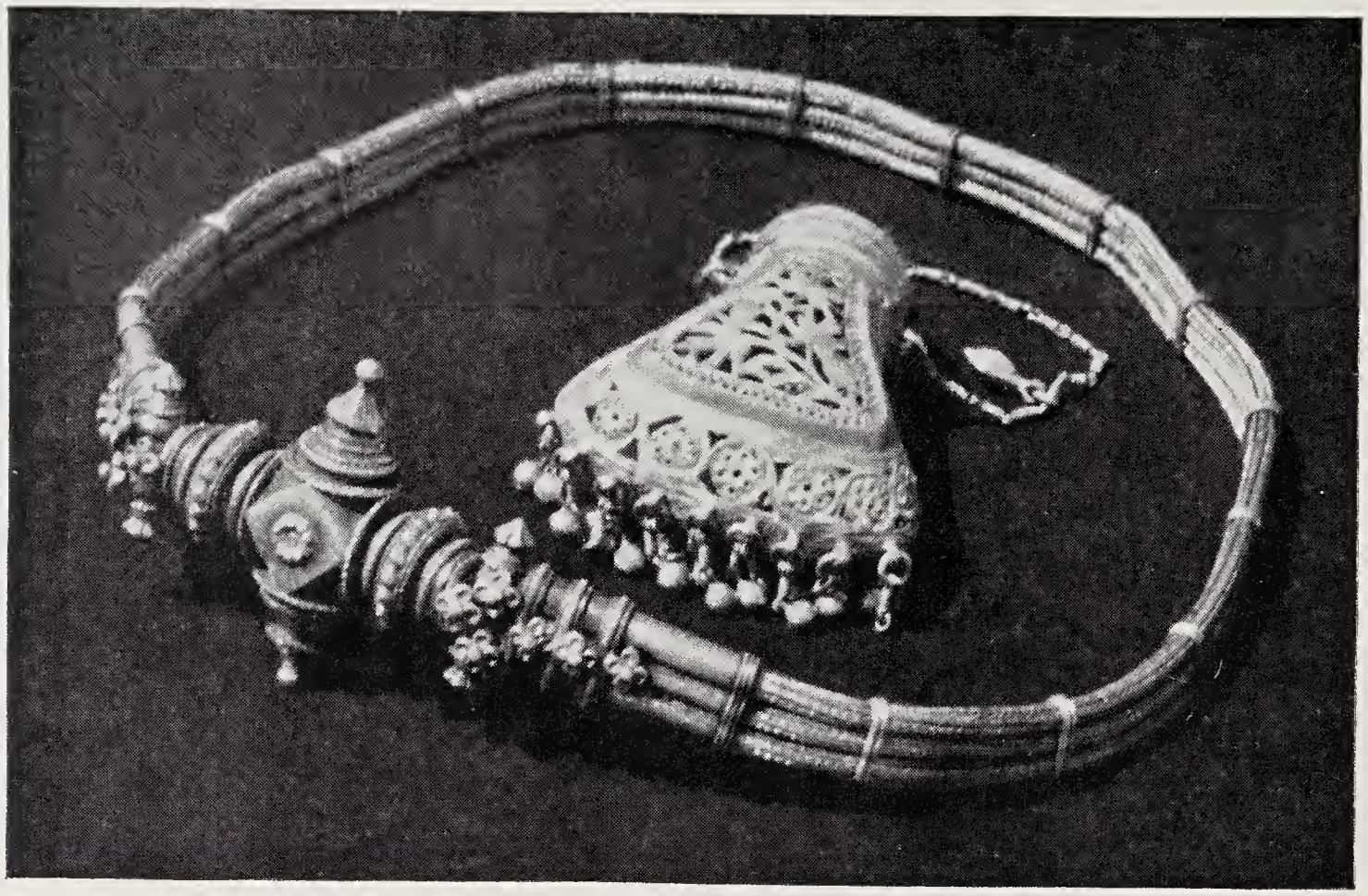
JEWELLERY

75. Rudraksha mala on silver chain with gold pendant studded with precious stones 7/3894 ; gold and bead ; 91 cm
South India.



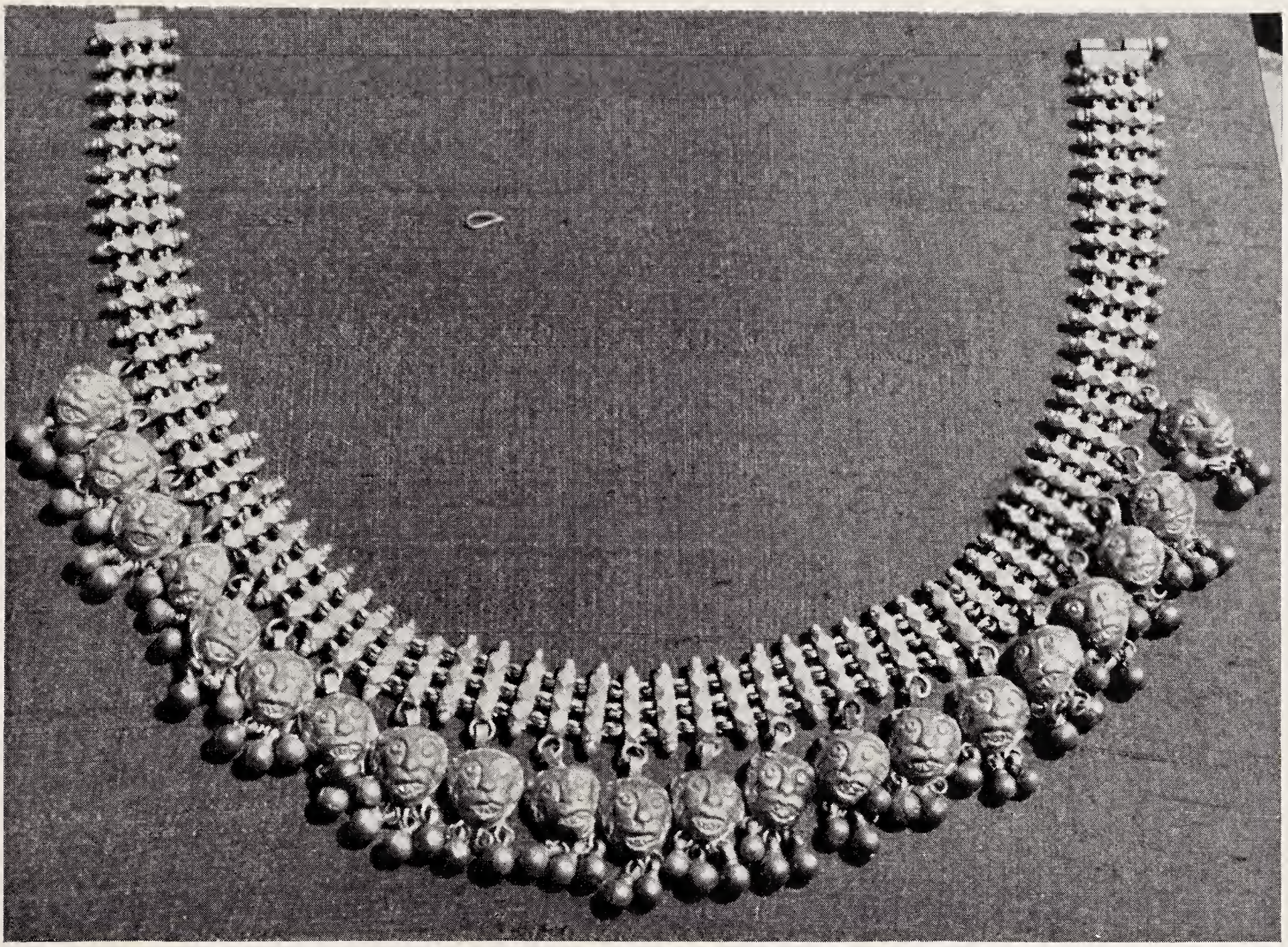
76. Jatanagam (Hair ornament) studded with diamonds, rubies and emeralds, pearl drops around the border and end formed of black thread tussels
7/2184 ; gold ; 52 cm
South India.

77. Tiara (Forehead ornament) studded with precious stones
J/SS/302 ; brass ; 25 cm × 11 cm
South India.

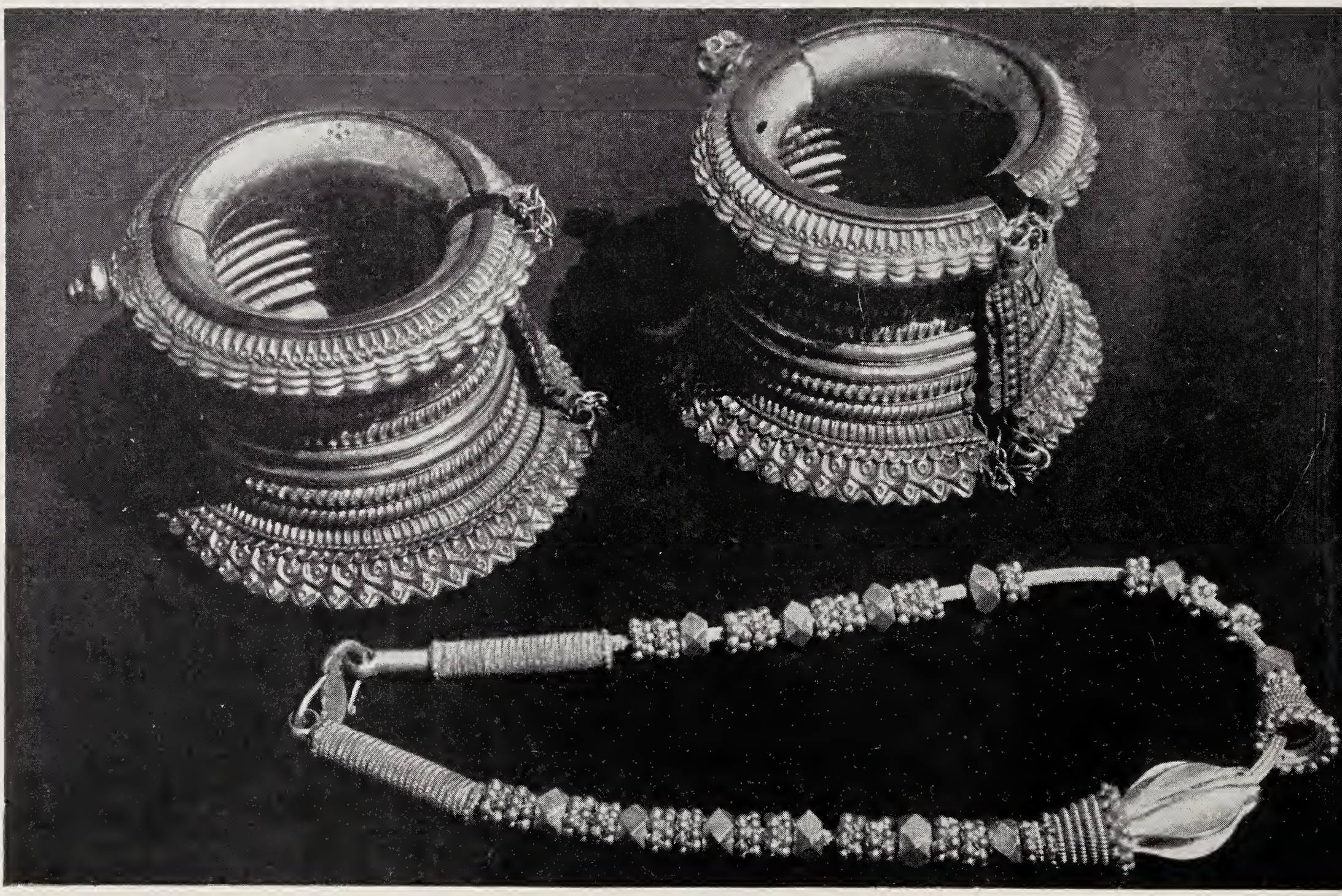


78. Waist band and Pendant
Folk/6 and Folk/5 ; silver ; 79 cm and 23 cm l.
Andhra Pradesh.

79. Bangle
16/298 ; silver ; 6 cm dia. (inner)
Orissa.



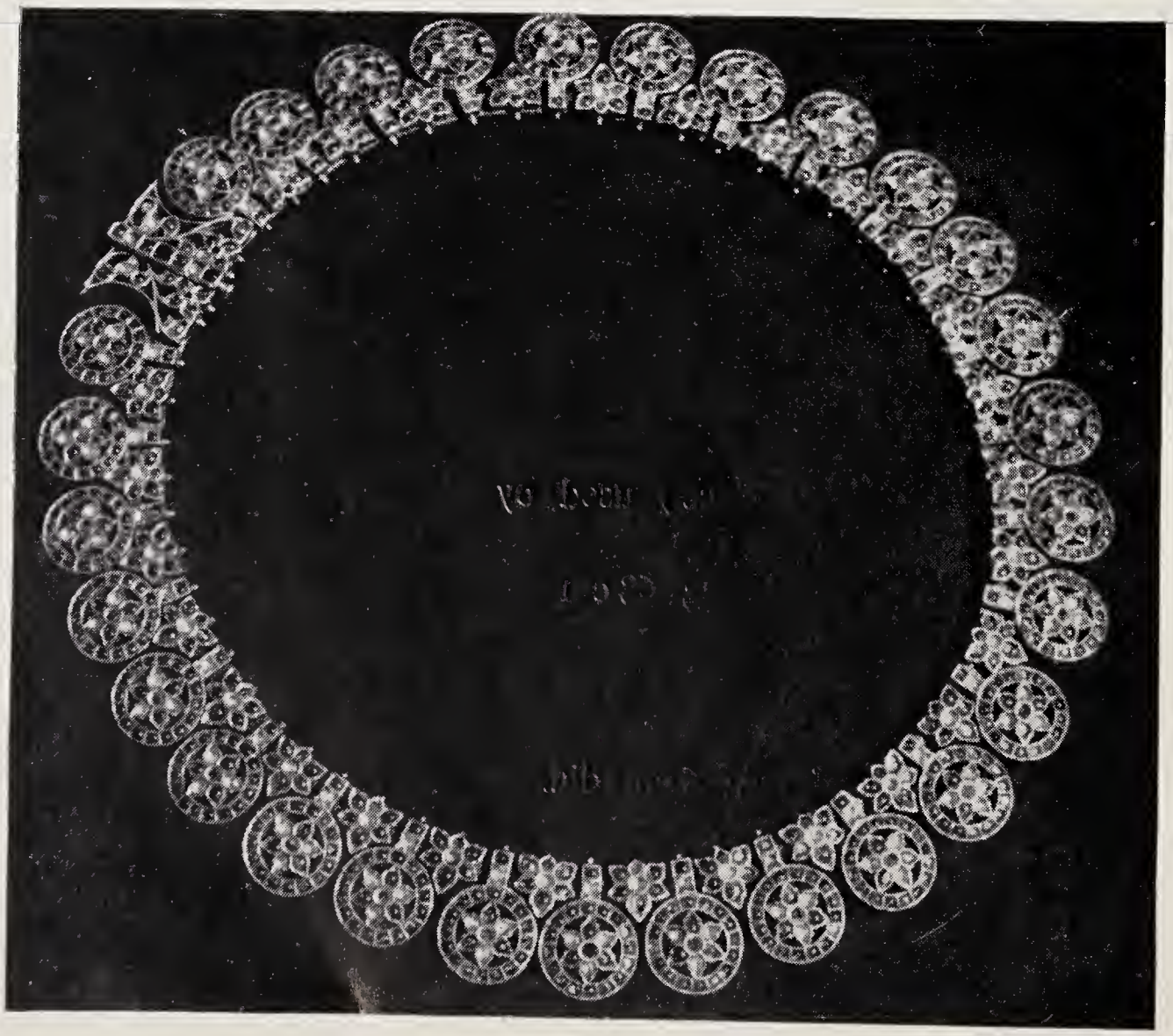
80. Necklace with pendants of animal head motifs worn by Sadara women
J/D/2 ; silver ; 39.5 cm
Orissa.



81. Bangles and Necklace
16/304 and 7/2247 ; silver ; 6.5 cm dia. and 46 cm .
Rajasthan.

82. a. Hansuli (Necklace) used by Lambadi women
J/LS/179 ; silver ; 68 cm
Andhra Pradesh.

b. Bracelet
7/2249 ; silver ; 6 cm dia.
Bihar.



83. Necklace with mangoe motifs studded with precious stones
J/JG/252 ; gold ; 61.5 cm
South India.

84. Necklace studded with precious stones
7/3915 ; gold ; 68 cm
South India.

WOOD

85. Lady with a bowl.
5/197 ; wood, painted ; 80 cm h.
Gujarat.

86. Lion Bracket
7/4225 ; wood,
painted ; 63.5 cm h.
Gujarat.

87. Kiritamukha

7/4203 ; wood, painted ; 88 cm × 34 cm
Kerala.

88. Man with a stick
7/2684 ; wood, painted ; 20 cm h.
Kondapalli, Andhra Pradesh.

89. Radha
16/244 ; wood, painted ; 35.5 cm h.
Orissa.

90. Female bracket figure
7/2511 ; wood, painted ; 29 cm × 24 cm
Kerala.

91. Astabhuja (Eight handed goddess)
14/105 ; wood, painted ; 55 cm h.
Kerala.

92. Cot leg (lion on a rabbit) 7/3814 ; wood ; 49 cm h. Gujarat.

93. Jagannatha, Subhadra and Balarama
16/118 ; wood, painted ; 23 cm
Puri, Orissa.

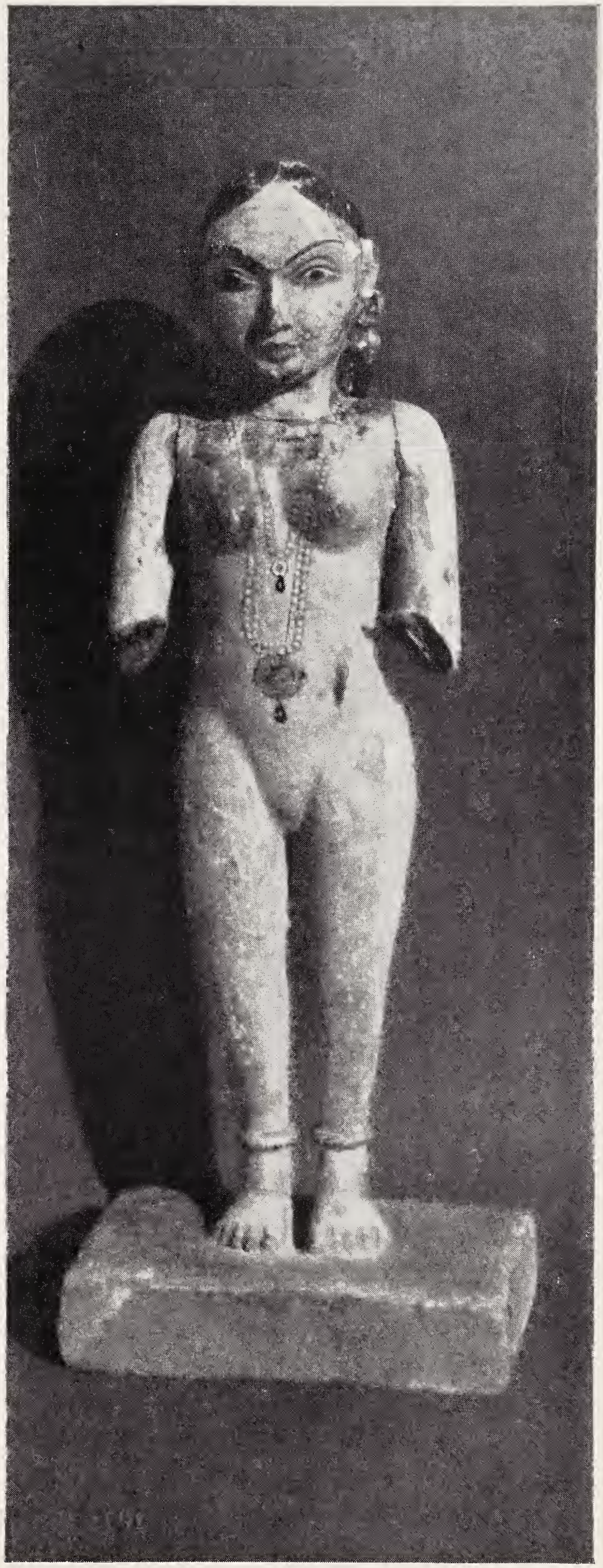
94. Cot leg in the shape of cockatoo
7/4177 ; wood, painted ; 39.5 cm h.
Rajasthan.

95. Subhadra and Arjuna
7/3347 and 7/3345 ; wood, painted ; 63 cm and 77 cm h.
South India.

96. Vastraharana (scene from the Krishna legend) 7/4203 ; wood, painted ; 209 cm × 36 cm Kerala.

97. Ritual female figure
7/3960 ; wood, painted ; 192 cm h.
Mangalore, Mysore.

98. Ritual Figure
7/3962 ; wood, painted ; 174 cm h.
Mangalore, Mysore.



99. Nayika
Folk/17 ; wood, painted ; 24 cm h.
Rajasthan.

100. Seated man
7/1777 ; wood ; 30.5 cm h.
NEFA.

TERRACOTTA

101. Man with a sword (Ayyanar)
7/2281 ; terracotta ; 44 cm h.
Tamil Nadu.

102. Ritual pradeep stand
3/66 ; terracotta ; 46.5 cm h.
Asharikandi (Goalpara) Assam.

103. Couple
13/167 ; terracotta, painted ; 41.5 cm h.
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.

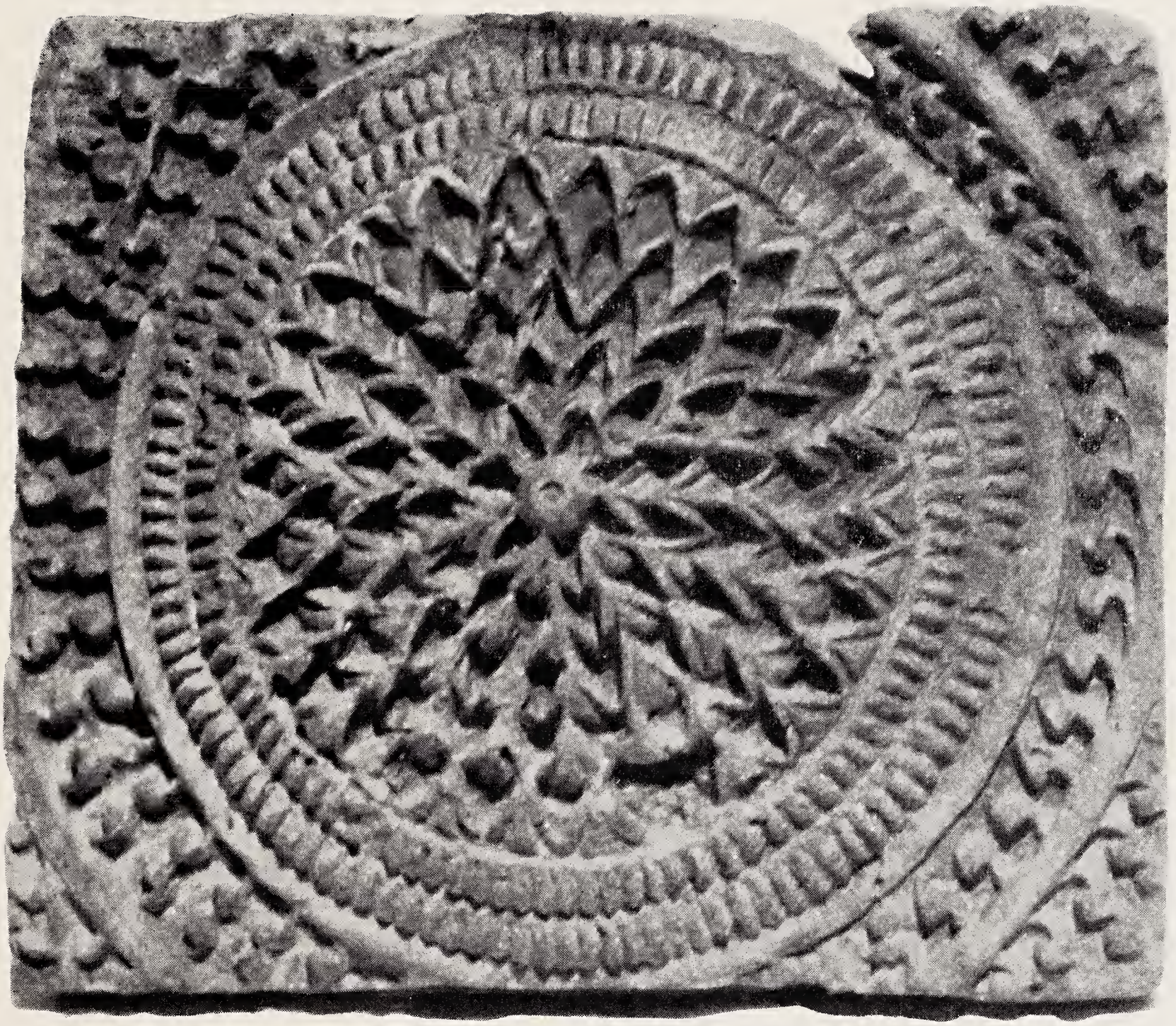
104. Krishna with two Gopis
Folk/14 ; terracotta, painted ; 17.5 cm h.
Rajasthan.

105. Head of Durga
7/2357 ; clay, painted ; 39.5 cm h.
Bengal.

106. Ritual Horse
7/316 ; terracotta, painted ; 41.5 cm h.
Punjab.

107. Rider on Horse
7/2229 ; terracotta, painted ; 55.5 cm h.
Darbhanga, Bihar.

108. Temple plaque depicting a monkey
4/456 ; terracotta ; 23 cm × 19 cm × 7 cm
Vishnupur, Bengal.



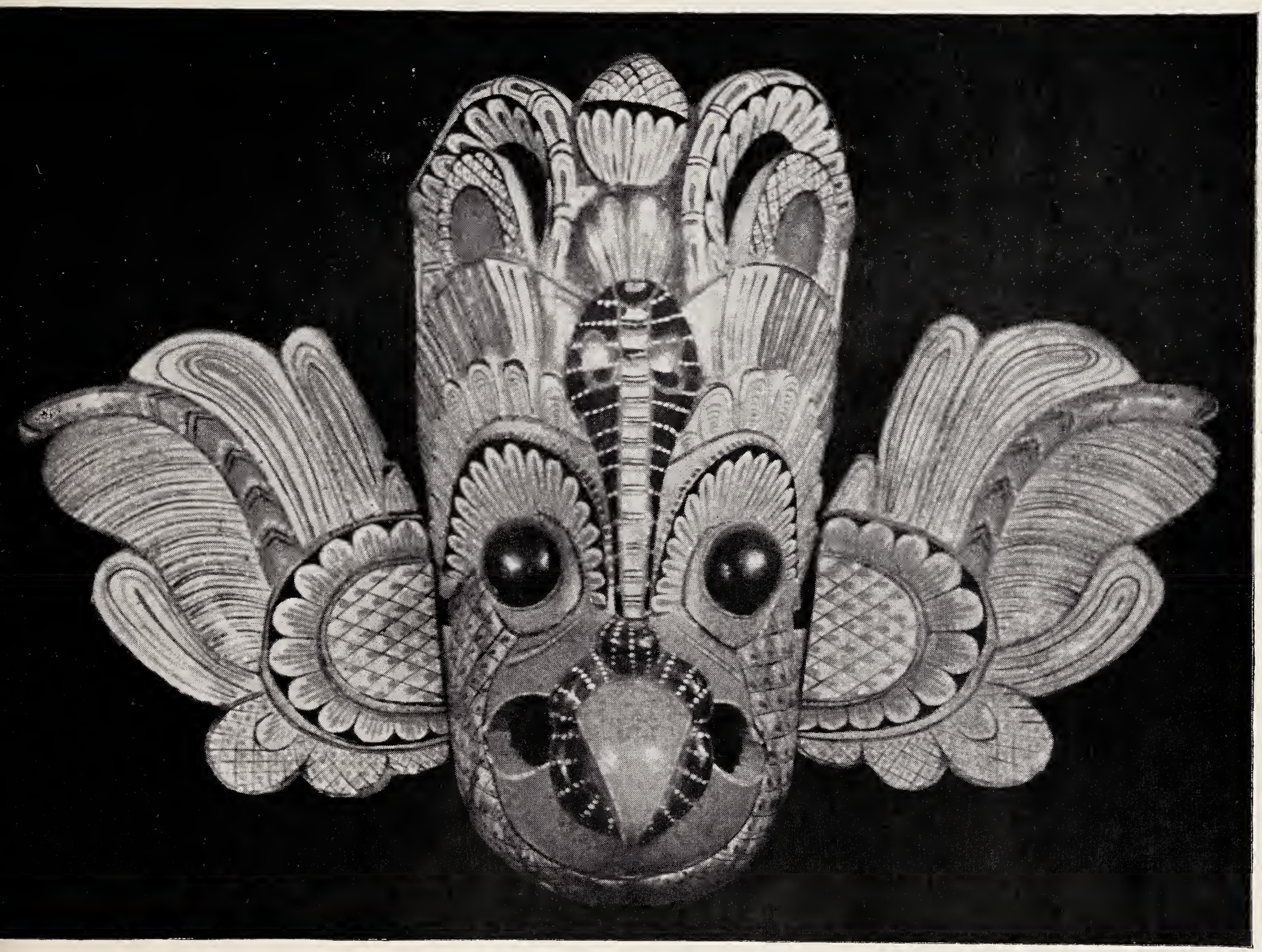
109. Temple plaque depicting a lotus
4/456 ; terracotta ; 24 cm × 20 cm × 7.5 cm
Vishnupur, Bengal.

110. Couple seated on a camel
Folk/13 ; terracotta, painted ; 38.5 cm h.
Rajasthan.

MASKS AND PUPPETS

111. Hanumana Mask
7/3182 ; wood, painted ; 43 cm h.
Orissa.

112. Female and Male Mask
7/4195 ; wood, painted ; 37 cm, 29 cm h.
Kerala.

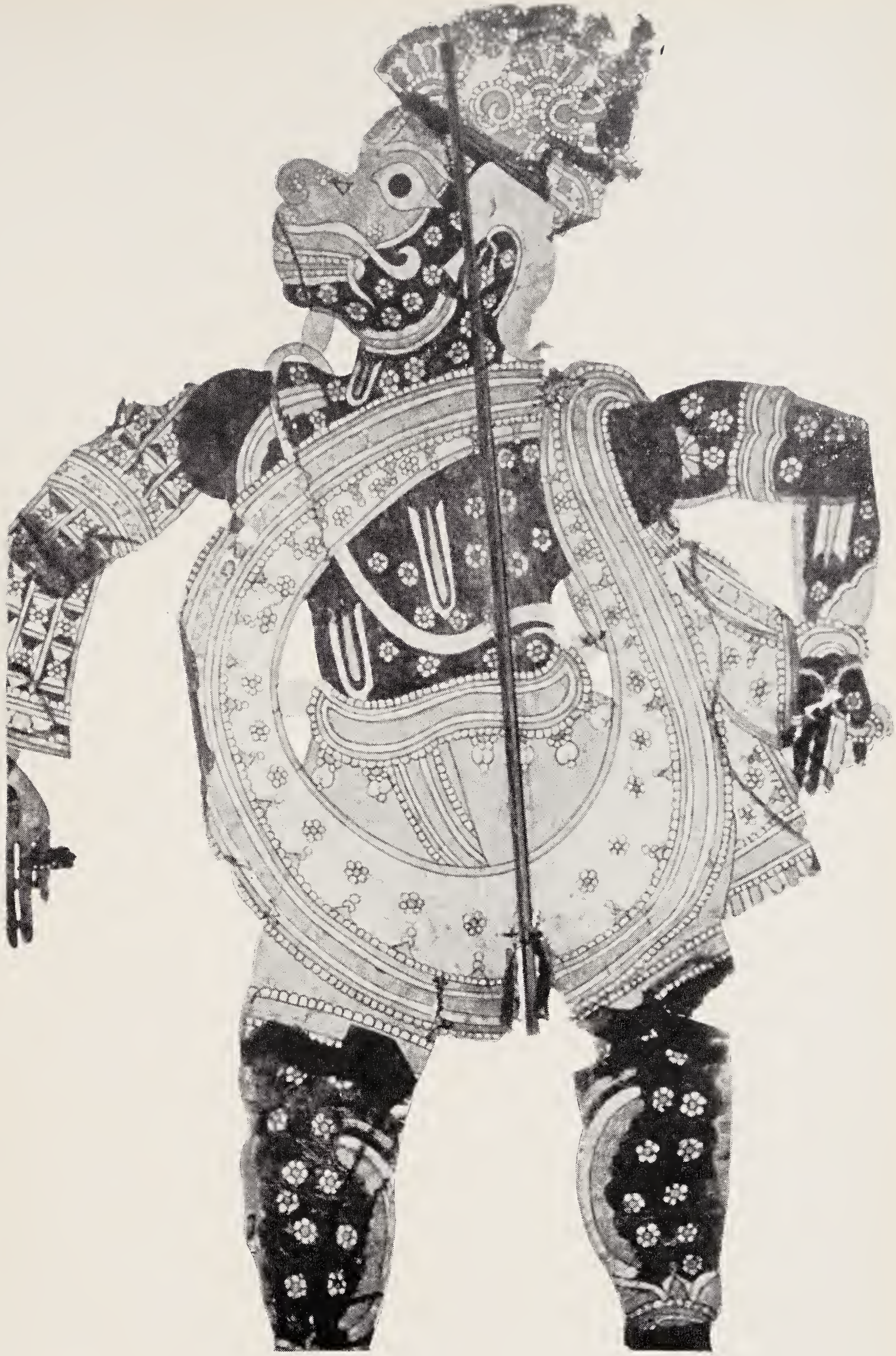


113. Garuda Mask
7/2459 ; wood, painted ; 47 cm h.
Ceylon.

114. Sita (scene from the Ramayana)
13/386 ; leather puppet, painted ; 117 cm × 33 cm
Andhra Pradesh.

115. Tiger (scene from the Ramayana)
13/386 ; leather puppet, painted ; 134 cm × 88 cm
Andhra Pradesh.

116. Puppets (court guard of King Janaka)
7/2127 (29) and (30) ; wood and cloth ; 48 cm and 53 cm
Jodhpur, Rajasthan.



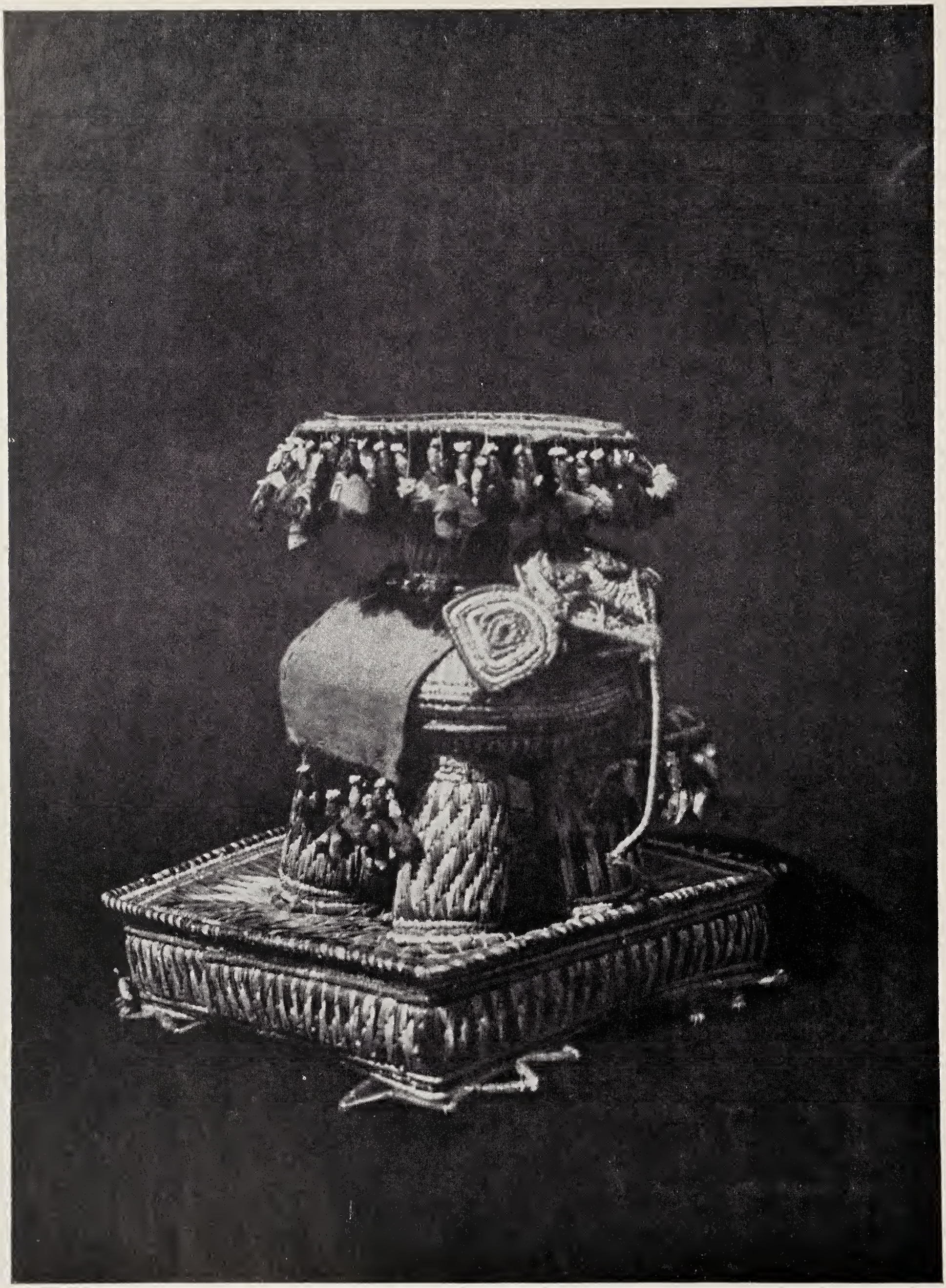
117. Hanumana (scene from the Ramayana)
13/386 ; leather puppet, painted ; 140 cm × 127 cm
Andhra Pradesh.

118. Puppet (Siva ?) head with a serpent hood
7/2127 (37) ; wood, 16.5 cm h.
Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

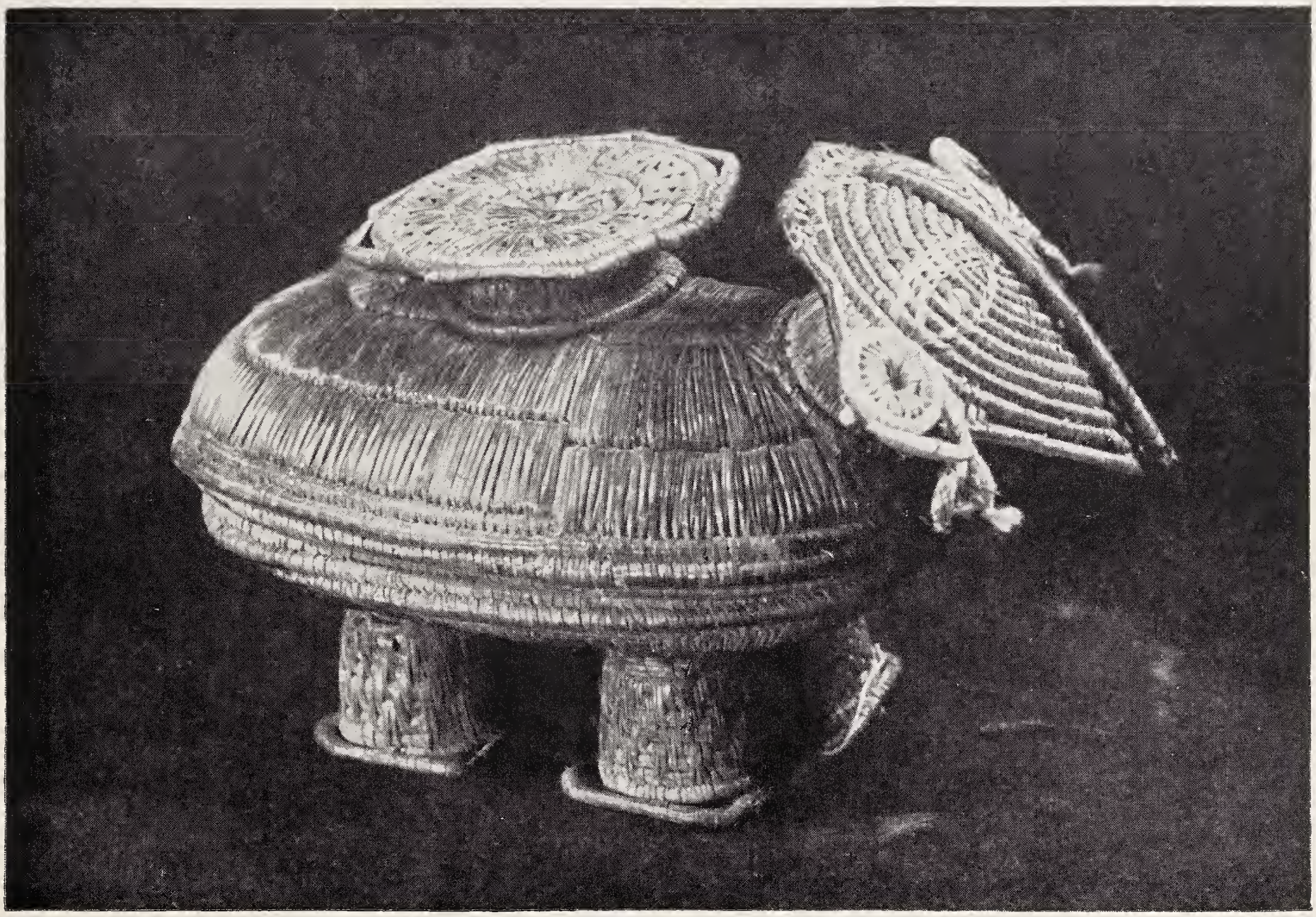
119. Puppets (court dancers of Ravana) 7/2127 (20) and 7/2127 (4) ; wood and cloth ; 53 cm and 51 cm h. Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

MISCELLANEOUS

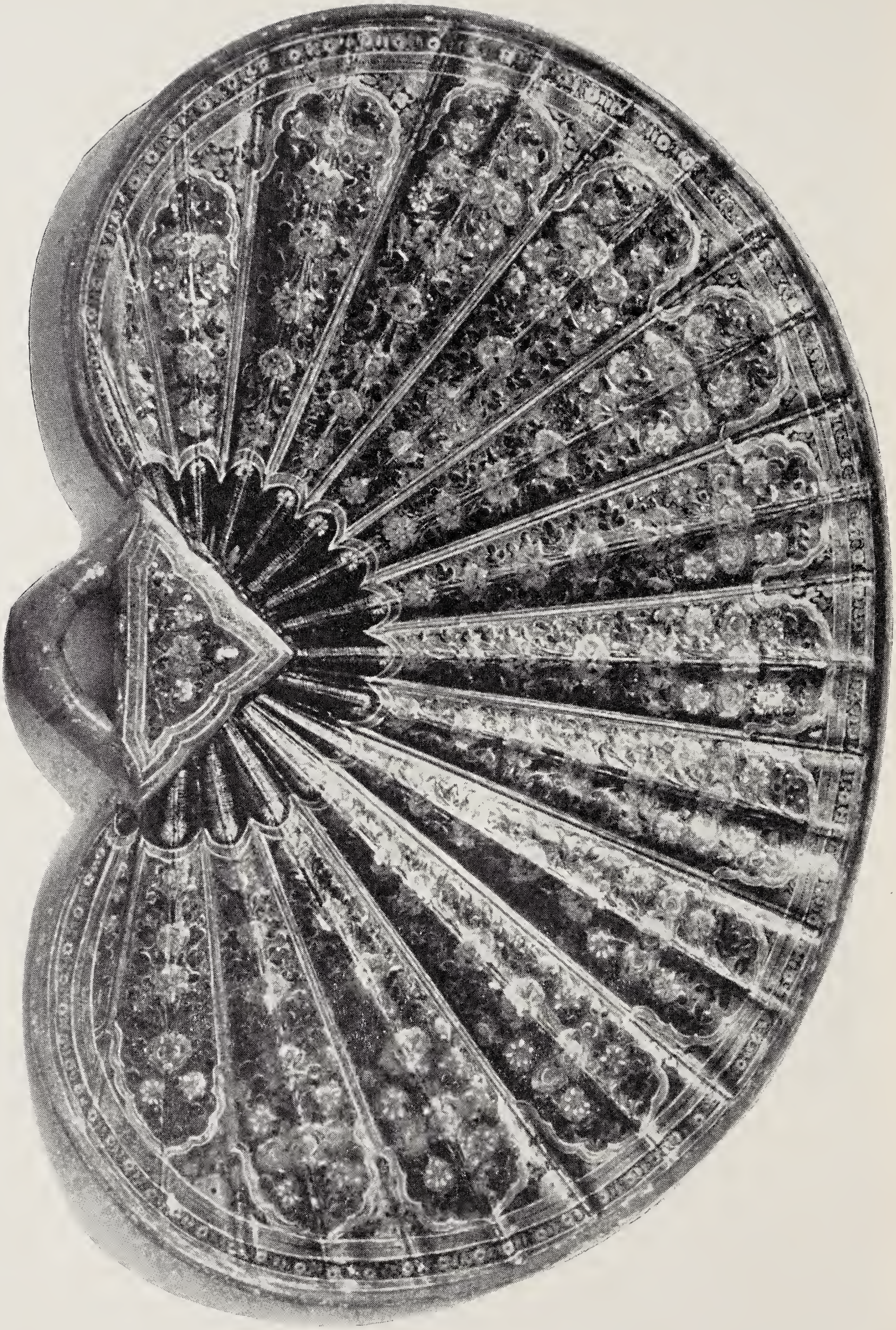
120. Beer Mug
7/1775 ; bamboo, painted ; 29 cm h.
Nagaland.



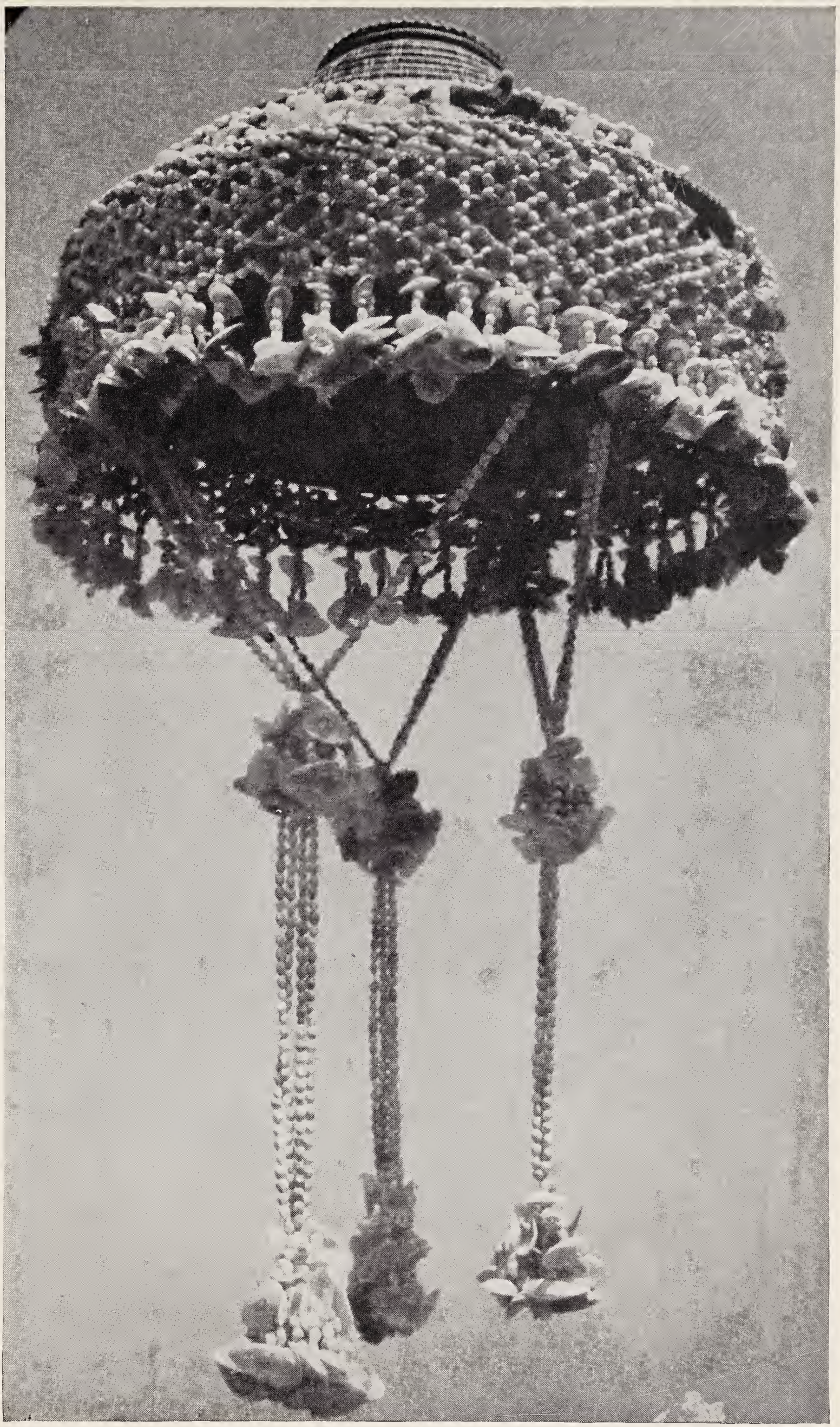
121. Elephant with chhatra (umbrella) 7/1770 ; sikki grass ; 23.5 cm h. Darbhanga, Bihar.



122. Elephant in the shape of
a casket
1/58/11/BCIP/25 ; sikki grass ; 15.5 cm h.
Darbhanga, Bihar.

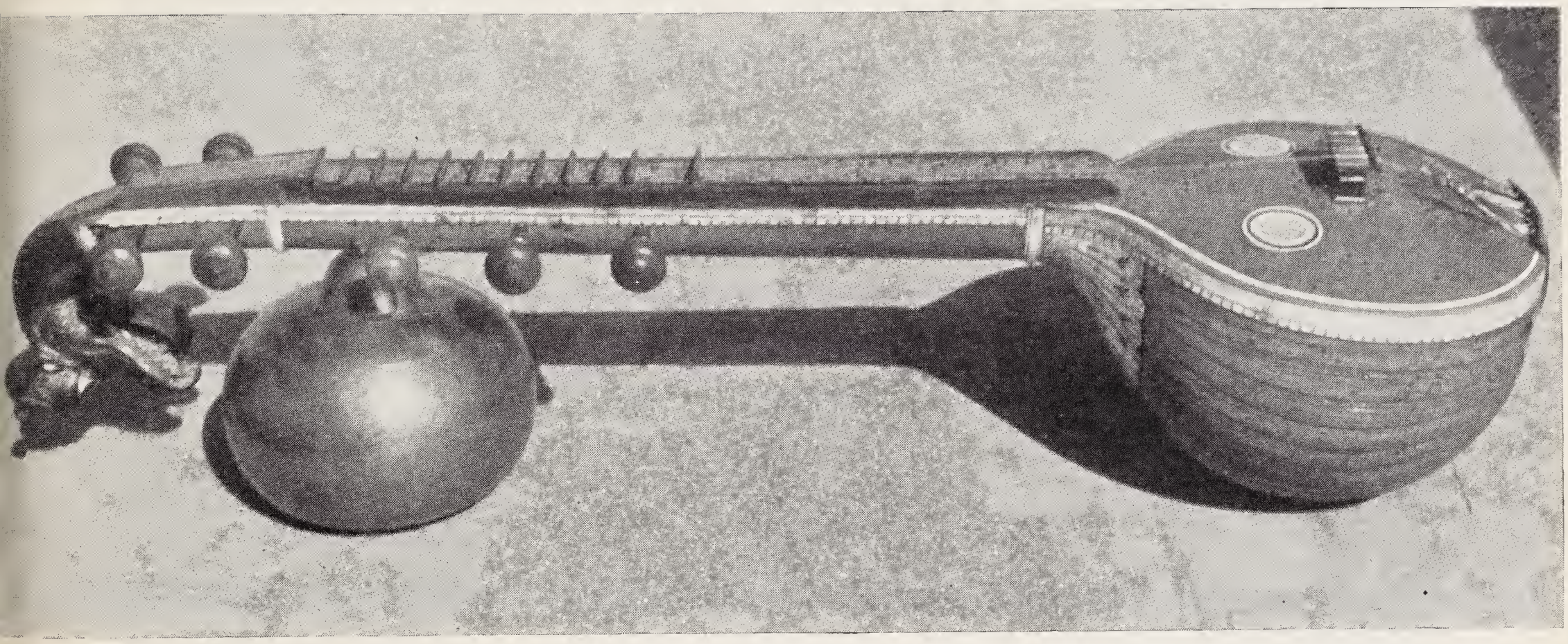


123. Fan
7/2930 ; cloth and wood, painted
Nirmal work ; 61.5 cm × 82 cm
Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.



124. Decorative lid (Dala)
7/3106 ; grass, decorated all over with beads and shells ; 85 cm h.
Bihar.

125. Dowry Box with lid
4/257 ; wood, painted ; 51 cm h.
Orissa.



126. Musical Instrument
Folk/7 ; wood with brass and ivory inlay ; 138 cm
South India.

127. Playing card (Ganjifa)
4/395 ; cloth, painted ; 10.5 cm dia.
Bankura, West Bengal.

128. Bead work
7/1272 ; bead and cotton ; 52.5 cm × 51 cm
Saurashtra, Gujarat.

129. Mug
7/1974 ; wood, painted ;
10.5 cm h.
Nagaland.